



Caring starts with you

Tips on being a healthy caregiver

Caring for a loved one or someone with an illness can be rewarding. But it can also be demanding on both your physical and emotional health. And as a caregiver, you likely have more than just that on your plate. You might find it tough to meet the time demands of your career, family and other commitments.

Depression is common among caregivers. It might not just be “stress.” Talk to your doctor if you have symptoms of depression, such as a lack of interest in things you enjoy, a lack of energy or trouble sleeping. Remembering to focus on your own health and well-being is key. Learning ways to manage your health, lower your stress and take care of yourself helps ensure you’re better able to take care of others too.

Tips for caregivers

Taking care of yourself makes you a better caregiver. Here are some tips to help keep you at your best.



Take care of your health

Keep up with regular doctor visits. Eat well. Exercise and get enough sleep. All these together help you stay as healthy as possible.



Share tasks

Make your to-do list and share them with family or friends. Ask for help with shopping and errands.



Include family in decisions

Including family members can be helpful when it comes to health care decisions, finances and insurance issues — even if they live out of state.



Ask for help

A counselor or therapist can help you better understand your feelings, build new coping skills and handle the challenges of caregiving.



Don't go it alone

Join a caregiver support group. It gives you a chance to talk about your worries and concerns with others who understand.



Find temporary care to get some relief

If you can, find someone who can stay with your loved one while you get away for a bit. Time away can help you recharge.



Find resources in your area

Hospitals, churches and other groups may be able to help with transportation or other tasks that come with caregiving.



Take a breath

Things like deep breathing and meditation can help relieve stress.



Take a break

Spend time doing things you enjoy. Make time for social activities and friends, even if it's only a phone call or coffee break.



Being the best possible caregiver starts by taking care of you. To learn more, register or log in at [Aetna.com](https://www.aetna.com) and look under "Stay Healthy."

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