

tips for caregivers

Cancer

Having a family member or close friend receive a cancer diagnosis can be upsetting news. Cancer overwhelmingly affects the person who is diagnosed, but it affects their caregivers and loved ones as well. Being the caregiver of a person with cancer has unique challenges and can be a full-time job. However, as a caregiver, it's important to take care of yourself too. See the tips below for ways to nurture yourself while caring for others.

Find your own support network

While you're providing support as a caregiver, it is important to have your own circle of support as well. Reach out to friends and family members or connect with a local or online support group for cancer caregivers. The more support you have, the better you can assist others.

Be well-informed

There is truth behind the saying 'knowledge is power'. Being knowledgeable about the cancer diagnosis, treatment options, and resources available can help ease your mind and the mind of the person you are caring for. Being well-informed also allows you to ask better questions of the cancer care team.

Take mini breaks

It may be hard, or you may feel guilty for taking breaks from caregiving, but short breaks are vital to preventing caregiver burnout. Take a walk, read, craft or do anything else you may enjoy to recharge your batteries. Giving yourself permission to take a break will make you a better caregiver as well.

Practice self care

Caring for yourself is a vital piece of being an effective caregiver. Make time to eat well, exercise and practice stress relieving activities!

Accept help

Know your limitations. It's ok to ask and accept help from those around you. In general, family and friends do want to help, but may not know how. Asking for help doesn't show weakness, it demonstrates strength!

Seek outside services

There are many services available for those with cancer and their caregivers. These services include meal delivery programs, financial management classes, in-home care, rides to appointments and access to health advocates. Ask your cancer care team for services that might be available in your area.

Online Resources for Caregivers

National Cancer Institute -
Resources for Caregivers
[cancer.gov/resources-for/caregivers](https://www.cancer.gov/resources-for/caregivers)

American Cancer Society -
Cancer Caregiver Support
[cancer.org/treatment/caregivers.html](https://www.cancer.org/treatment/caregivers.html)

Cancer Advocacy - Caring for the Caregiver
[canceradvocacy.org/resources/cancer-survival-toolbox/special-topics/caring-for-the-caregiver/](https://www.canceradvocacy.org/resources/cancer-survival-toolbox/special-topics/caring-for-the-caregiver/)

CancerCare - Caregiving
[cancercare.org/tagged/caregiving](https://www.cancercare.org/tagged/caregiving)

Meals on Wheels
[mealsonwheelsamerica.org/](https://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/)