**Being a Caregiver**

Understanding your role and its responsibilities is the first step toward being an effective caregiver. Use these tips to get started.

**TRY THIS**

**Understand your role.** Caregivers do a lot. They communicate, make decisions, and support the patient.

**Communicate openly and often.** Talk with your loved one about how you can help, and be honest when you need extra support.

**Think about the impact on your life.** Plan for these changes, like taking time off from work or being away from home a lot.

**Keep records.** Thorough records of appointments, treatments, and medications can help you file health insurance claims.

**CHECK THIS OUT**

Visit the Springboard page Being a Caregiver. [https://survivorship.cancer.gov/springboard/get-support/being-a-caregiver](https://survivorship.cancer.gov/springboard/get-support/being-a-caregiver)

Read about what caregivers do. [https://goo.gl/2UGFcr](https://goo.gl/2UGFcr)

Read these publications for caregivers. [https://go.usa.gov/xRf3J](https://go.usa.gov/xRf3J)

Learn how to keep records. [https://goo.gl/W4eEVG](https://goo.gl/W4eEVG)

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**Care for Your Body**

Caring for someone else’s health doesn’t mean you shouldn’t take time to care for yourself. Make your health a priority, too.

**TRY THIS**

**Use a calendar or set reminders on your phone.** Don’t forget to take your medications, and don’t miss your own check-ups or other appointments.

**Prioritize healthy habits.** A balanced diet, plenty of exercise, and a good night’s sleep will keep you healthy and help keep your energy up.

**Sign up for HealthyYouTXT.** Try a text message program to help you eat better, get active, or manage your weight. [https://smokefree.gov/healthyyoutxt-programs](https://smokefree.gov/healthyyoutxt-programs)

**CHECK THIS OUT**

Visit the Springboard page Care for Your Body. [https://survivorship.cancer.gov/springboard/get-support/care-for-your-body](https://survivorship.cancer.gov/springboard/get-support/care-for-your-body)

Read these recommendations for physical activity ([https://goo.gl/jCAo1x](https://goo.gl/jCAo1x)) and nutrition ([https://goo.gl/8LKGjH](https://goo.gl/8LKGjH)).

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**Care for Your Mind**

Caregivers need to take care of their emotional and mental health to avoid burnout and handle stress in healthy ways.

**TRY THIS**

**Get support.** Consider a support group or counseling for dealing with tough times.

**Take time for yourself.** Give yourself opportunities to recharge to help you avoid burnout.

**Get active.** Physical activity can help you stay calm and focused and manage depression, anxiety, and sleep problems.

**CHECK THIS OUT**

Visit the Springboard page Care for Your Mind. [https://survivorship.cancer.gov/springboard/get-support/care-for-your-mind](https://survivorship.cancer.gov/springboard/get-support/care-for-your-mind)

Read about taking care of yourself ([https://go.usa.gov/xRf2n](https://go.usa.gov/xRf2n)) and getting help in caring ([https://goo.gl/eXpLPn](https://goo.gl/eXpLPn)) for your loved one.

Watch Springboard’s mindfulness & relaxation exercises. [https://goo.gl/oSWkBE](https://goo.gl/oSWkBE)

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**Finding Meaning & Purpose**

Connecting with the meaning and purpose of caregiving can help you cope with distress and reframe the caregiving experience into something positive.

**TRY THIS**

**Change the way you think about caregiving.** Think about people who have taken care of you in the past and the role model you’re being for others.

**Focus on what you can control.** Choose how you handle the caregiving role and how you face challenges.

**Practice self-care.** Make time to take care of your body, mind, and soul.

**CHECK THIS OUT**


Watch videos of guided mindfulness and relaxation exercises. [https://goo.gl/oSWkBE](https://goo.gl/oSWkBE)
**After Treatment Ends**

The end of treatment doesn’t always mean the end of caregiving. Manage this transition and the emotional challenges that might come with it.

**TRY THIS**

**Discuss follow-up care.** Your loved one may or may not need you to help with follow-up care.

**Think of yourself, too.** Catch up on the things you might’ve missed out on like check-ups, exercise, and the activities you love.

**Process your feelings.** Some caregivers find it harder to deal with their emotions after treatment. Find ways to manage these feelings so they don’t become a problem.

**CHECK THIS OUT**


Read the [Facing Forward](https://go.usa.gov/xRfDq) booklet from the National Cancer Institute and the American Cancer Society’s Life After Treatment Guide ([https://goo.gl/K2PD5f](https://goo.gl/K2PD5f)).

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**End-of-Life Care & Bereavement**

Being a caregiver for someone with advanced or terminal cancer has unique challenges. Know what to expect as your loved one approaches end-of-life and find out how to cope with loss.

**TRY THIS**

**Engage in end-of-life decision-making.** Seek assistance to understand care options and what legal and financial decisions may need to be made.

**Offer support.** Let your loved one know that you are there for them if they wish to talk.

**Find ways to manage emotions.** Care for your emotional and physical health as you provide end-of-life care or mourn a loss.

**CHECK THIS OUT**


Read the [End-of-Life Care Fact Sheet](https://go.usa.gov/xnxq2).