

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>

Read about what caregivers do. <https://goo.gl/2UGFct>

Read these publications for caregivers. <https://go.usa.gov/xRf3J>

Learn how to keep records. <https://goo.gl/W4eEVG>

<https://survivorship.cancer.gov/springboard/>

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/healthyoutxt-programs>

CHECK THIS OUT

Visit the Springboard page 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>) and nutrition (<https://goo.gl/8LKgJH>).

<https://survivorship.cancer.gov/springboard/>

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>

Read about taking care of yourself (<https://go.usa.gov/xRfbz>) and getting help in caring (<https://goo.gl/eXpLpL>) for your loved one.

Watch Springboard's mindfulness & relaxation videos. <https://goo.gl/oSWkBE>

<https://survivorship.cancer.gov/springboard/>

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

Visit the Springboard page Finding Meaning & Purpose. <https://survivorship.cancer.gov/springboard/get-support/finding-meaning-and-purpose>

Watch videos of guided mindfulness and relaxation exercises. <https://goo.gl/oSWkBE>

<https://survivorship.cancer.gov/springboard/>

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

Visit the Springboard page After Treatment Ends. <https://survivorship.cancer.gov/springboard/get-support/after-treatment-ends>

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/K2PD5i>).

<https://survivorship.cancer.gov/springboard/>

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

Visit the Springboard page End-of-Life Care & Bereavement. <https://survivorship.cancer.gov/springboard/get-support/end-of-life-care-bereavement>

Read the End-of-Life Care Fact Sheet. <https://go.usa.gov/xnxq2>

<https://survivorship.cancer.gov/springboard/>