

Tips for Caregivers

Be a Healthy Caregiver

Caring for someone who has Alzheimer's disease can be overwhelming, exhausting and stressful. A family caregiver may feel loss over changes in relationships with a loved one who has Alzheimer's disease, other family members or friends. During this time, it is critical that caregivers look after their own physical and mental health.

Become an educated caregiver. As the disease progresses, new caregiving skills are necessary. Find information on www.alz.org or contact your local Alzheimer's Association.

Get help. You are not failing as a caregiver by asking others for assistance. Seek the support of family, friends and community resources. Support group meetings are a good source of comfort and reassurance. Or, you can join an online community.

Know what resources are available. Adult day care, in-home assistance, visiting nurses and Meals-on-Wheels are just some of the services that can help you.

Take care of yourself. Watch your diet, exercise and get plenty of rest. Make time for shopping, lunch with friends or even a golf outing. Take advantage of community services such as adult day care or in-home companion services to care for your loved one while you take a break.

Stories from caregivers...



My mom has Alzheimer's disease. She keeps forgetting to take her medications. When I remind her, she gets mad and says I shouldn't be bossing her around. My sister says I shouldn't be so sensitive.

My wife has Alzheimer's disease. She doesn't recognize me any more and keeps asking to go home. We've been married for 43 years and we've raised our children and lived in this same house for 30 years.

Manage your stress level. Stress can cause physical problems and changes in behavior. If you experience symptoms of stress, use relaxation techniques that work for you, and consult your doctor.

Accept changes as they occur. People with Alzheimer's disease change and so do their needs. They often require care beyond what you can provide on your own. Look into care services such as in-home caregiver services and residential care.

Do legal and financial planning. Consult an attorney to discuss legal, financial and care issues. If possible and appropriate, involve the person with Alzheimer's disease and other family members.

Be realistic. Many of the things that happen are beyond your control and the control of the person with Alzheimer's disease. Grieve your losses, but also focus on the positive moments.

Give yourself credit, not guilt. You are doing the best you can. Don't feel guilty because you can't do more. Your loved one needs you, and you are there – feel good about what you can do.

For further information, please contact:

Gina Green-Harris, Director
Milwaukee Outreach Program and Services
Wisconsin Alzheimer's Institute-Milwaukee Office
UW School of Medicine and Public Health
(414) 219-5083 | greenharris@wisc.edu
Or visit us online at wai.wisc.edu

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Wisconsin Alzheimer's Institute

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Regional Milwaukee Office