

Stress Relief for Caregivers



If you're the primary caregiver for a spouse, parent, or other relative, you face a tough challenge. Here's what you can do to make the workload easier.

- Set up the sickroom on the main floor, so you don't have to continually go up and down stairs.
- Purchase or rent equipment that will make caregiving easier. Examples include an electric hospital bed, an over-bed table, and a walker or wheelchair.
- Keep clean bed linens, towels, washcloths, hand lotion, drinking cups, and other supplies in or near the sickroom.
- Develop a daily schedule and stick to it.

To reduce the stress of your ongoing responsibility:

- Delegate some tasks to family and friends.
- Investigate community services that provide transportation, deliver meals, and provide other kinds of help.
- Enlist the services of a home health care agency. The social service or discharge planning department of your hospital, Social Security Administration, local agency on aging, county public health department, or your physician, can refer you to an agency in your area.
- Plan to get out of the house to shop or socialize at least one day a week.
- Find out if the cost of hiring help to care for someone at home is covered by your medical insurance provider, Medicaid, or Medicare. The Veterans Administration may be able to provide financial assistance for veterans' medical or nursing care.