Stress Busters

Caring for someone you love can put strain on your physical and emotional health. The act of caregiving can take a toll on anyone who is constantly taking care of someone.

17% of caregivers feel their health in general has gotten worse as a result of their caregiving responsibilities.¹

With an ageing population, more and more people are taking on the additional responsibility of caring for a loved one. Many caregivers may feel that they have to do everything themselves. Caregivers should use tools and resources available, or ask a family member to help with some of the tasks of caring for someone else.

Taking the right steps to address stress early on is a good way to help. It takes a lot of time, energy, and dedication to be a caregiver and it is important to keep stress levels down.

Some signs of caregiver stress include:
• Feeling tired and exhausted
• Feeling overwhelmed and irritable
• Sleeping too much or too little
• Significant weight loss or gain
• Loss of interest in activities

Here are a few ways you can take better care of yourself and lower your overall stress levels.

Prepare meals in advance: Caregivers usually know how to eat right, they just don’t have the time to do so. Prepare meals in larger quantities and freeze any leftovers. Should you miss a meal, this can provide an alternative solution to ordering take out or eating fast food.

Meditate: Research shows that meditation can dramatically improve the mental health of caregivers. By taking 12 minutes a day to meditate, you can decrease your overall stress and re-focus yourself to get back on track and finish your day strong.

Have healthy snacks on hand: It is important to make sure that your blood sugar doesn’t drop too low or you may end up feeling tired and exhausted. Have a few health snacks on hand such as fruits, veggies, almonds, yogurt, or other types of quick and easy items. Eating smaller snacks throughout the day can help you maintain a steady energy level.

¹ ARP Public Policy Institute Valuing the Invaluable: 2012 Update. The Economic Value of Family Caregiving
Contact Us
Your program provides access to tools and other resources online or call us directly to speak to a professional counselor who is available everyday and at any time to provide confidential assistance at no cost to you.
Visit MagellanHealth.com/member

Resources
The National Alliance for Caregiving
www.caregiving.org

HelpGuide
www.helpguide.org/topics/caregiving.htm

Slow down: During heightened levels of stress you may feel rushed and that you need to hurry to your next task. Unfortunately, rushing can cause accidents. Slow down and take on one thing at a time.

Take time for you: Set aside time during your week for yourself. Whether it is spending an hour at a café and enjoying a book, or going see a movie with a friend—taking time for you is important and can help lower your stress level.

Take a moment to sleep: Be sure that you are getting enough rest every night. Getting sound sleep is extremely important for your physical and emotional health. If you wake up feeling tired try to go to bed earlier next time or find ways to relax before bed.

Seek out help from others: Speak with family members and split up some of your caregiving responsibilities with others. Don’t be afraid to ask. Having others in the family help with caregiving tasks can take a lot of pressure off of you.

Find and use community resources: There are a number of different local and national community services and resources available. Go to your local senior center and ask for a list of services.