



Practical tips for family caregivers

Consider the Helios Care team a partner in meeting the changing needs of the person who receives your care. As your loved one transitions through different stages of illness under our care, we will work with you to provide the best care possible while also trying to give you and the person you are caring for quality time together. Knowing that practical care needs are met can give you the peace of mind to be able to focus on the things that are important to you.

- Protect your quiet time – use the answering machine to screen calls or hang a “do not disturb” sign on the door when resting.
- Establish “visiting hours” so that you can control your privacy and time as much as possible.
- When cooking, make simple meals and twice as much; freeze the extras.
- Use paper goods to shorten clean up time.
- Cut down on shopping trips by buying extra supplies of items that you know you will need.
- Make a list of items you need and keep a small amount of cash on hand so that you can easily reimburse helpful friends when they offer to run an errand.
- Create a schedule – you might not be able to follow it exactly, but knowing you have a plan for the day can reduce anxiety and help you feel more in control.
- Pick a willing family member or friend to be in charge of relaying updates by phone or email to others who are concerned.
- Get a notebook or folder to use as a centralized place to keep track of phone numbers, medications, appointments, etc.
- Be ready with an answer when a friend asks, “Is there anything I can do to help you?” Make a list of simple errands or chores that need to be done, but don’t have to be done by you. Save your time for the things that are most important to you.
- Think about the people in your life. Who could become a part of your support system? Who do you trust to walk the dog? Who can spend time with the person you care for so that you can get out to take a walk or relax? Remember that our team also is here to help you in any way we can.



Helios Care

COMPASSION, CHOICES & DIGNITY



Be aware of warning signs

The strain of caregiving can lead to exhaustion – physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Such exhaustion, sometimes called “burnout,” can cause compassionate, involved caregivers to feel detached, resentful, sad and even angry, and become unable to continue giving good care. Caregivers often neglect themselves while caring for everyone else. Trying to do your best all the time for another person can sometimes feel like a burden. Yet caregiving can be a rewarding and fulfilling experience that will bring you great pride.

Consider these signs that you may need help from others:

- Avoiding phone calls or visits from friends, family and other loved ones
- Loss of interest in fun activities you previously enjoyed, such as going to a movie or eating out
- Feeling blue, irritable, hopeless and helpless without relief
- Changes in appetite, weight or both
- Changes in sleep patterns – feeling tired all the time or “keyed up” and unable to rest
- Getting sick often
- Feeling emotionally and physically exhausted
- Feeling irritable, impatient or angry at your loved one or yourself
- Feeling resentment about giving care, or toward others who you feel should be helping more
- Experiencing guilt about your feelings
- Feelings of wanting to hurt yourself or the person for whom you are caring

If any of these signs appear for you, please know that you are not alone. Let the Helios Care team, your personal healthcare provider or your clergy know what is going on.



Helios Care is committed to helping you make the most of this time as you care for someone else. We hope that you will see our team as a source of strength and guidance. Share your questions and concerns with us. Call us at 607.432.5525 or visit HeliosCare.org to sign up for a Caregiver Support Group.