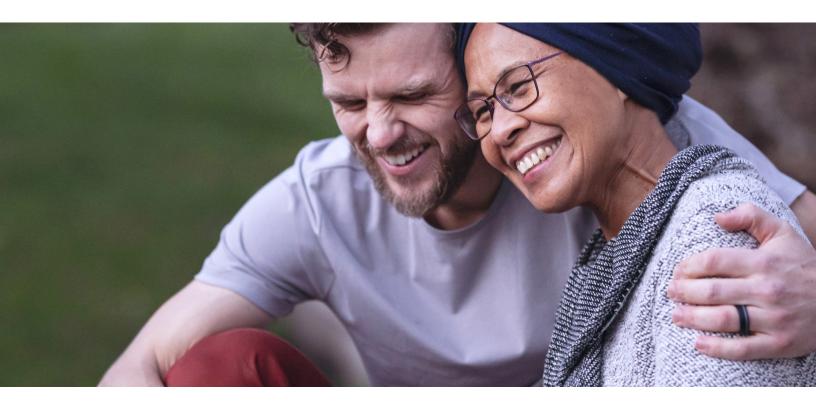**MAYO CLINIC**
HEALTH SYSTEM

Journey to Wellness — A free self-guided healthy living program

Care for the caregiver

Being a caregiver is a rewarding yet demanding role. While focusing on the needs of others is admirable, forgetting your well-being can lead to stress, burnout and even health problems. Remember, **a healthy and supported caregiver is a better caregiver**. Use these insights and tips to prioritize your self-care and remain resilient in your journey. **Caring for others starts by caring for you.**

Caring for yourself is important

- **Improved physical and mental health:** Neglecting self-care weakens your ability to cope with stress, increasing vulnerability to anxiety, depression and physical illness.
- **Enhanced quality of care:** A positive and energized caregiver provides better support and fosters stronger relationships with those they care for.
- **Sustainable resilience:** By taking care of yourself, you build coping mechanisms to navigate challenging situations with greater ease and maintain a commitment to providing quality care over the long term.

Essential self-care tips

- **Recognize stress signals:** Watch out for common symptoms like fatigue, irritability, changes in sleep or appetite, and difficulty concentrating. These are your body's way of saying you need to recharge.
- **Nourish your body and mind:** Fuel your body with healthy meals, exercise regularly, practice good hygiene and prioritize sleep. Schedule preventive checkups and promptly address health concerns.
- **Connect with your tribe:** Build a support network of friends, family or fellow caregivers. Sharing your experiences and receiving encouragement can be a powerful boost.
- **Set achievable goals:** Don't try to be a superhero. Delegate tasks, ask for help and accept imperfections. Remember, progress, not perfection, is key.
- **Carve out "me time:"** Dedicate time to activities you enjoy, even if it's just for a few minutes each day. Reading, listening to music, spending time in nature or pursuing a hobby can be incredibly rejuvenating.
- **Establish a relaxation technique:** Learn techniques like deep breathing or meditation to help regain your inner peace and balance.
- **Learn to say no:** It's good to set boundaries to protect your time, space and health. Practice saying no when the request is outside of your boundaries.
- **Seek professional guidance:** Don't hesitate to seek mental health support if you're struggling to cope with stress or emotional challenges. A therapist can offer invaluable tools and support.

By prioritizing self-care, you'll be a more present, empowered and resilient caregiver. Don't forget — caring for yourself is part of caring for others.

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