

Caregiver Support: Tips During Coronavirus Crisis

A caregiver is anyone who is caring for parents, siblings, children, or friends. Being a caregiver for a loved one can be very challenging during the best of times. It may be especially challenging as you deal with limitations posed by the social isolation that is needed to help fight the coronavirus. Some of your resources that normally support you, may not be available to you right now.

Here are some tips to help you cope.

- Continue to try to take care of your own health. This includes: exercise, eating right, taking YOUR medications, and getting enough sleep.
- If your loved one has you awake at night, try to take one or two short naps during the day to catch up on sleep.
- Weather permitting, open the windows to get some fresh air or even sit or walk outside for a short period.
- Even though you can't have visitors and need to stay home with the person you are caring for, accept any offers of meals and snacks that can be left at your door.
- Consider alternatives to face to face communications. In addition to regular phone calls, consider FaceTime or Skype to connect with others.
- If you find yourself getting overwhelmed, assure that your loved one is safe and step away for a while to take a deep breath and refocus. When you are calm you can return to your caring role.
- If you have children who are unexpectedly home due to school closures, explore online activities such as craft classes, cooking classes, virtual park or museum tours.
- Caregiving is hard work! When you have the chance take a break, read, listen to music, cuddle with your pets to relieve some stress.

- Be alert to signs of depression and let your healthcare provider know if you think you are experiencing depression.

Give yourself credit for doing the best that you can in difficult circumstances!