

take care of yourself

10 ways to be
a healthier caregiver



10 symptoms of caregiver stress

- 1. Denial** about the disease and its effect on the person who's been diagnosed.
I know Mom is going to get better.
- 2. Anger** at the person with Alzheimer's or others, anger that no cure exists or that people don't understand what's happening.
If he asks me that one more time I'll scream!
- 3. Social withdrawal** from friends and activities that once brought pleasure.
I don't care about getting together with the neighbors anymore.
- 4. Anxiety** about facing another day and about the future.
What happens when he needs more care than I can provide?
- 5. Depression** that begins to break your spirit and affects your ability to cope.
I don't care anymore.
- 6. Exhaustion** that makes it nearly impossible to complete necessary daily tasks.
I'm too tired for this.
- 7. Sleeplessness** caused by a never-ending list of concerns.
What if she wanders out of the house or falls and hurts herself?
- 8. Irritability** that leads to moodiness and triggers negative responses and actions.
Leave me alone!
- 9. Lack of concentration** that makes it difficult to perform familiar tasks.
I was so busy, I forgot we had an appointment.
- 10. Health problems** that begin to take a mental and physical toll.
I can't remember the last time I felt good.

If you experience any of these signs of stress on a regular basis, make time to talk to your doctor.

how to manage stress: 10 ways to be a healthier caregiver

Are you so overwhelmed by taking care of someone else that you have neglected your own physical, mental and emotional well-being? If you find yourself without the time to take care of your own needs, you may be putting yourself and your health at risk.

1. Understand what's happening as early as possible

Symptoms of Alzheimer's may appear gradually. It can be easy to explain away changing or unusual behavior when someone seems physically healthy. Instead, consult a doctor when you see changes in memory, mood or behavior. Don't delay; some symptoms are treatable.

2. Know what community resources are available

Contact the Alzheimer's Association or use our online Community Resource Finder ([communityresourcefinder.org](https://www.alz.org/communityresourcefinder)) to find Alzheimer's care resources in your community. Adult day programs, in-home assistance, visiting nurses and meal delivery are just some of the services that can help you manage daily tasks.

3. Become an educated caregiver

As the disease progresses, new caregiving skills may be necessary. The Alzheimer's Association offers programs to help you better understand and cope with the behaviors and personality changes that often accompany Alzheimer's. Visit [alz.org/care](https://www.alz.org/care) to learn more about care training resources, including free e-learning workshops.

4. Get help

Trying to do everything by yourself will leave you exhausted. Seek the support of family, friends and community resources. Use our free, personalized online Care Team Calendar (alz.org/carecalendar) to organize family and friends who want to help. Our 24/7 Helpline, ALZConnected™ online social networking community (alzconnected.org) and local support groups are good sources for finding comfort and reassurance. If stress becomes overwhelming, seek professional help.

5. Take care of yourself

Watch your diet, exercise and get plenty of rest. Making sure that you stay healthy will help you be a better caregiver.

6. Manage your level of stress

Stress can cause physical problems (blurred vision, stomach irritation, high blood pressure) and changes in behavior (irritability, lack of concentration, change in appetite). Note your symptoms. Use relaxation techniques that work for you, and talk to your doctor.

7. Accept changes as they occur

People with Alzheimer's change and so do their needs. They may require care beyond what you can provide on your own. Becoming aware of community resources — from home care services to residential care — should make the transition easier. So will the support and assistance of those around you.

8. Make legal and financial plans

Plan ahead. Consult a professional to discuss legal and financial issues including advance directives, wills, estate planning, housing issues and long-term care planning. Involve the person with Alzheimer's and family members whenever possible. Use Alzheimer's Navigator™ (alzheimersnavigator.org) to help assess your needs and create a customized action plan.

9. Give yourself credit, not guilt

Know that the care you provide does make a difference and you are doing the best you can. You may feel guilty because you can't do more, but individual care needs to change as Alzheimer's progresses. You can't promise how care will be delivered, but you can make sure that the person with Alzheimer's is well cared for and safe.

10. Visit your doctor regularly

Take time to get regular checkups, and be aware of what your body is telling you. Pay attention to any exhaustion, stress, sleeplessness or changes in appetite or behavior. Ignoring symptoms can cause your physical and mental health to decline.

we're here for you, all day, every day

24/7 Helpline – 800.272.3900

- Confidential consultation by master's-level clinicians.
- Help provided in more than 170 languages and dialects.
- Referrals to community programs and services in your area.

Alzheimer's and Dementia

Caregiver Center – [alz.org/care](https://www.alz.org/care)

- Online tools including Alzheimer's Navigator™, ALZConnected™, Community Resource Finder and the Care Team Calendar.
- Information and resources for daily care, stages and behaviors, safety, care options, and financial and legal planning.

caregiver stress daily checkup

How many signs have I experienced today?

- Denial
- Anger
- Social withdrawal
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Exhaustion
- Sleeplessness
- Irritability
- Lack of concentration
- Health problems

Whenever stress is a concern, consult your doctor, and contact the Alzheimer's Association for information and support.

alzheimer's  association®

The Alzheimer's Association is the world's leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health.

Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's®.

For information and support,
contact the Alzheimer's Association:

800.272.3900
alz.org

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