

Every patient is surrounded by caregivers that stand with them in the cancer fight to make the hard times easier. The role of caregivers is vital, and they want to do their best. It's also important for caregivers to take care of themselves. Keeping these tips in mind can help caregivers as they care for patients.

### **Be Prepared to Care**

Stepping into the role of a caregiver can be an overwhelming task, but there are ways to help ease the anxiety. Texas Oncology suggests these tips for new caregivers:

- Talk to the patient about their medical care and how you can best help
- Understand and respect your loved one's wishes
- Educate yourself about the patient's condition using credible resources
- Communicate with the patient, doctor, and other family members
- Think positively
- Be a good listener
- Involve others and delegate caregiving responsibilities
- Stay organized

### **Care for Yourself While Caring for Others**

It is easy for caregivers to become so focused on tending their patients that they neglect to care for themselves. Caregivers play a key role in taking care of the physical and emotional well-being of the patient, and it is crucial that they also take care of themselves during this time. Here are some ways to take care of yourself:

#### **Take Care of Your Body and Mind:**

*Be your best so you can do your best*

- Find time to exercise, even just a quick 30-minute walk
- Follow a healthy diet
- Find social time to enjoy your friends
- Get enough sleep

#### **Find Support:**

*Don't do it alone*

- Know it is ok to ask for help and seek professional help, if needed
- Find a support group
- Accept assistance – let family and friends help cook, clean, shop, or spend the day with the patient
- Take time away from caregiving, respite care can offer assistance to allow time away
- If the time is right, hospice care can provide skilled nursing care, equipment, and volunteers to help support families in difficult times
- Take advantage of one of the social networks that are designed to help family and caregivers share experiences and provide updates

#### **Cope with Your Feelings:**

*It is ok to feel a range of emotions*

- Think positively
- Search for acceptance
- Connect with others

- Laugh

### About Texas Oncology

With more than 550 physicians and 300 locations, Texas Oncology is an independent private practice, a member of The US Oncology Network, that sees more than 71,000 new cancer patients each year. Founded in 1986, Texas Oncology provides comprehensive, multi-disciplinary care, and includes Texas Breast Specialists, Texas Center for Proton Therapy, Texas Colon & Rectal Specialists, Texas Imaging & Infusion Center, Texas Oncology Surgical Specialists and Texas Urology Specialists. Texas Oncology's robust community-based clinical trials and research program has contributed to the development of more than 100 FDA-approved cancer therapies. Learn more at [TexasOncology.com](https://www.texasoncology.com).

*Sources: American Association of Retired Persons, American Cancer Society, and National Cancer Institute*



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Updated: 10/18/2024

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