

Caregiver Tips

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

Cope With Your Feelings:

It is ok to feel a range of emotions

- Think positively
- Search for acceptance
- Connect with others
- Laugh

Source: AARP, American Cancer Society, National Cancer Institute, Texas Oncology Physicians and Patients



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