

Let's be well

A vacation from stress: Help for family caregivers



Caring for an elderly parent or a loved one who has a chronic condition or special needs can be stressful. It can also take a toll on your own health if you don't remember to make time to take care of yourself.

Taking “respite” allows a family caregiver to temporarily turn over *full* responsibility for their loved one's care to someone else so they can rest, recharge and restore their sense of self. This makes it different from occasional or even daily help from family members, friends or volunteers.

Options for respite for caregivers

In your own home – Someone cares for your loved one while you have time away or for yourself. This help can come from family members, a community-based volunteer group or home health agency.

Day services – Your loved one spends part of the day at an adult day program, often at a community or non-profit facility, with trained professionals as well as volunteers who oversee care, activities and engagement.

Nursing home, group home or other residential facility – Allows caretakers to take more time away; depending on the facility, your loved one may stay a week or two, a month or longer.

Top eight caregiver tips

Being a caregiver requires an inordinate amount of energy, strength and time. Here are some tips to help you manage the responsibility and stress:

1. Seek support from others, in person and online
2. Don't neglect your own health
3. Ask for help — and make your requests task-specific
4. Make a “things to discuss with the doctor” list
5. Take respite as often as possible
6. Be mindful of your own depression — and get help
7. Organize medical information so it's up-to-date and easy to find
8. Ensure legal documents are in order

For more tips visit:
caregiveraction.org