

HomeTimes

Your Independent Senior Living Resource for Aging in Place

From America's Choice in Homecare.

Respite Care Can Help Manage Family Caregiver Stress

Being a family caregiver for an older adult is a difficult job. While some aspects of caring for an elderly loved one can feel rewarding, it's a physically demanding and emotionally challenging task that can sometimes lead to anger, guilt, or frustration. These feelings are normal.

When caring for a loved one, it may be hard to find time to take breaks. However, if you're a family caregiver, it's also important to take care of yourself to prevent "caregiver burnout" — a state of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion that has been linked to a decline in overall health.

Respite care services provided by a professional, in-home caregiver can give you time to care for yourself while ensuring your loved one does not go without help.

How Can Respite Care Help?

Respite care is short-term caregiving relief for the primary family caregiver. Respite care can be scheduled for a few hours or a few weeks and may take place at home, at a health care facility, or even in an adult daycare center.

Sources of respite care vary and may include professional organizations or community-based sources. Some long-term care insurance plans may entirely or partially cover the financial cost of respite care services.

Respite care provides benefits and advantages including:

Emotional and Physical Relief

Caring for someone 24/7 can be overwhelming, especially if you haven't had any professional training in caregiving. Physical, mental, and emotional fatigue can sneak up on you if you're not careful, and you may find yourself falling behind in your other responsibilities. Respite care services will provide time to focus on your family, job, personal health, etc.

An Economical Care Alternative

Respite care is much more affordable than moving your elderly loved one into an assisted-living facility. Family and friends may be willing to help provide care, but if they are not available when you need additional support, short-term respite care services can be an affordable alternative.

A Way to Restore Family Relationships

When you're a primary caregiver, it's normal to deal with a range of emotions. It's also normal for the elderly to feel



shame, guilt, or resentment at their deteriorating health and loss of independence. These complicated feelings can sometimes lead to tension between family members. Respite care can allow you to take a step back and heal your family relationships.

Assistance for Your Caregiving Responsibilities

All of these benefits mean that you'll be better equipped to handle your caregiving duties. You may find yourself enjoying time with your elderly loved one more. You may also feel more energetic and better able to handle the physical aspects of caregiving.

Starting Respite Care

Consider sharing your feelings and needs with family first. Schedule a meeting to discuss the type of help you need and review everyone's strengths, weaknesses and availability. If possible, make a plan that divides the caregiving responsibilities among family and enables you to take time you need for yourself.

Caregiving is better when it is done as part of a team effort. Take care of yourself and take advantage of professional respite care services when needed to help you and your elderly loved one maintain the highest possible quality of life.



Prevent Elderly Loved Ones from Getting Bed Sores

If you're caring for an older adult who is confined to a bed or who uses a wheelchair, you should look for bed sores. While "bed sores" may not sound dangerous, they can be painful and lead to serious complications such as infection or non-healing wounds.

Elderly people who are confined to beds or are wheelchair-dependent need help to prevent bed sores, which can negatively affect their health, well-being and overall quality of life.

What is a Bed Sore?

Bed sores, also known as "pressure or decubitus ulcers," are injuries to the skin and underlying tissue that are caused by prolonged pressure.

Bed sores often occur over bony areas of the body, such as the:

- Tailbone
- Heels
- Hips
- Ankles

People who are required to spend a lot of time in bed or in a wheelchair can experience bed sores on:

- Sides and back of the head
- Shoulder blades
- Lower back
- Backs of the knees
- Buttocks
- Spine
- Shoulder blades
- Backs of the arms and legs where they rest against the chair

When a bed sore develops, it can lead to serious complications, including infection of the skin, bone, or joints as well as sepsis, a life-threatening response to infection.

If you suspect your loved one has developed a bed sore, be sure to bring them to a doctor for proper diagnosis and treatment.

How Can You Prevent Bed Sores in the Elderly?

The two main strategies to prevent bed sores are repositioning and skin care. Repositioning is key for relieving the prolonged pressure that can cause bed sores. Try to do the following:

- Reposition your loved one every 1–2 hours or sooner if they feel uncomfortable. When repositioning, always be sure to lift and not drag, as this can damage the skin.
- Make sure cushions or mattresses are made of pressure-relieving materials like foam, or is a model filled with gel or air. Also, place foam or gel pads between your loved one's knees and ankles when lying on their side, and beneath the heels, tailbone, calves, elbows, shoulders, and shoulder blades when lying on their back. Avoid using a donut-shaped cushion, as this can place extra pressure on the surrounding tissue.
- Avoid raising the elevation of the head of your loved one's bed more than 30 degrees. This helps prevent them from sliding down the bed and injuring their skin.
- Have the fit of your loved one's wheelchair checked by a doctor at least once per year, or more often if they feel uncomfortable, to prevent excess pressure.

Proper skin care will keep skin robust and healthy and less prone to developing bed sores. Make sure you focus on:

- Inspecting your loved one's skin daily for warning signs of bed sores, and always check the areas of skin where they commonly develop.
- Washing skin with a soft sponge or cloth and a gentle cleanser. Scrub lightly and always pat dry to avoid accidentally injuring the skin. If your loved one is incontinent, be sure to clean away urine and stool frequently.
- Applying moisturizing creams and skin protectants daily, especially to areas that are prone to bed sores.

Caring for an elderly loved one who is confined to bed or who uses a wheelchair can be difficult, because proper patient handling is physically demanding. If you're having trouble caring for your elderly loved one, consider working with a qualified home care worker to help prevent bed sores and improve your loved one's quality of life.



Gnocchi Primavera

½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese, divided
 12 halved grape tomatoes
 1 teaspoon olive oil
 10 leaf (blank)s torn fresh basil leaves
 2 tablespoons pine nuts
 1 can of cooking spray
 1 (16 ounce) package potato gnocchi
 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
 1 zucchini, chopped
 12 medium (blank)s fresh mushrooms, cleaned and stems trimmed

Instructions:

Spray a nonstick skillet with cooking spray, and place over medium-low heat. Place about 2 tablespoons of Parmesan cheese at a time into the skillet. Cook until the cheese melts into a thin circle, begins to bubble, and browns at the edges, about 1 minute. Flip the crisp, and brown the other side for about 30 seconds. Remove the crisp to a plate to cool. Make 3 more cheese crisps the same way.

Heat 1 teaspoon of olive oil in a skillet over medium heat, and cook and stir the pine nuts until lightly toasted and fragrant, about 3 minutes. Remove the pine nuts from the skillet and set aside.

Cook the gnocchi according to the package directions, and drain them in a colander set in the sink.

Pour 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a large skillet over high heat, and cook and stir the zucchini just until seared, about 2 minutes; remove the zucchini from the pan. Reduce the heat to medium, and cook and stir the mushrooms in the same pan, until they begin to give up their juices but are still firm, about 5 minutes. Drain the juices. Return the zucchini to the pan; add the tomatoes, torn basil leaves, toasted pine nuts, drained gnocchi, and the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil, and stir a few times to combine and heat through.

To serve, divide gnocchi among four plates, and serve each plate topped with a Parmesan cheese crisp.

Nutritional Information

Serving Size: 4 servings • Calories: 327
www.allrecipes.com/recipe/203712



Iced Pumpkin Spice Cake

1 serving PAM® coconut oil no-stick cooking spray
 3 cups ultragrain® all purpose flour
 4 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
 2 teaspoons baking powder
 1 cup Parkay® original-stick, softened
 2 cups firmly packed brown sugar
 1 cup Egg Beaters® original
 1 (15 ounce) can solid-pack pumpkin
 1½ cups golden raisins
 1½ cups confectioners' sugar
 2 tablespoons water
 1 cup chopped pecans or walnuts
 1 tablespoon Reddi-wip® fat free dairy whipped topping

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Spray 13x9-inch baking pan with cooking spray. Combine flour, pumpkin pie spice and baking powder in medium bowl; set aside.

Mix together Parkay and brown sugar in large bowl on medium-high speed of electric mixer until creamy. Add Egg Beaters; mix until blended. Turn mixer to low; add pumpkin. Gradually blend in flour mixture. Stir in raisins by hand. Pour into prepared pan.

Bake 40 to 45 minutes or until wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool completely in pan on wire rack.

Blend confectioners sugar and water; drizzle over cake. Sprinkle nuts evenly over top. Cut into 12 servings. Top with Reddi-wip just before serving, if desired.

Nutritional Information

Serving Size: 12 servings • Calories: 553
www.allrecipes.com/recipe/238944