

Tips for Stroke Caregivers

If you are caring for a stroke survivor, you may have a lot of questions about whether your loved one will recover and what his or her needs will be in the months and years ahead. You may also worry about how you will manage in your new role.

In the U.S., more than 50 million people provide care for a loved one with a disability or illness. Anywhere from 59% to 75% of caregivers are women, and most are caring for an older parent. Yet despite the challenges of care giving, many people report that they appreciate life more and feel positive about being able to help.

As a caregiver, it can be all too easy to make your loved one the focus of your life. "Caregivers really need to care for themselves too. People feel obligated to do it all, but it's vital to ask for help. You can't do it alone.

Organize healthcare needs

- Keep a running list of questions to take with you to doctor's appointments.
- Keep a list of daily medication for the stroke survivor. (Include the drug name, purpose of drug, dosage and possible side effects.) Take this list with you to all doctor's appointments.
- Use a calendar to keep appointments straight.

Provide emotional support

- Encourage the stroke survivor to talk about his or her feelings. Listen, show love and patience.
- Read an article or book together about another stroke survivor. This helps stroke survivors know they are not alone.
- Join a support group for encouragement and ideas from people who've been there. [Locate a support group in your area](#)

Promote independence

- Allow the survivor to take care of himself or herself as much as possible. Although it may be difficult to watch your survivor struggle to do things alone, this promotes greater independence in the long run.

Provide socialization opportunities for yourself and your survivor

- Go to the mall or grocery store with your survivor so you both can enjoy some physical activity.
- Consider adult day care for the survivor during the week to give yourself a break and a social opportunity for your survivor.
- Continue pre-stroke hobbies and activities as much as possible. Call friends regularly to play tennis or golf or to go walking, and schedule friends, family or professional caregivers to take care of your survivor during that time.