



## For Caregivers: Coping Tips

Caregivers often feel they must tend to their loved one's needs full time. But burning yourself out doesn't help anyone. You can't take good care of someone else without taking good care of yourself as well. It's not selfish. It's essential. Take a break. Eat right. Get out and exercise. Most of all, accept that you can't do everything yourself.

### Give Yourself a Break

All of the things you do are not equally important. Set priorities. That way you won't be busy all the time. Look after your health. Go for a walk each chance you get. Take a long bath. Lift your spirits by having lunch with a friend. Or do nothing for an hour. Just nap or relax.



### Accept Help

Knowing you can count on others can be a relief. Accept help when it's offered. And be willing to ask for help when you need it. Those who care about you really do want to help.

### If You Feel Depressed

Over time, stress from the event of the stroke should lessen. Yet your life may have changed. Realizing this may cause grief, both for you and your loved one. Contact your doctor if either of you shows signs of depression. Treatment can help you find hope—even when you think nothing can help.

#### Common Signs of Depression

- Feeling down **most** of the time
- Feeling guilty or helpless
- Losing pleasure in things you used to enjoy, such as reading, exercise, or social events
- Sleeping less or more than normal
- Having a big rise or fall in appetite or weight
- Feeling restless or irritable
- Feeling tired, weak, or low in energy
- Having trouble focusing, remembering, or making decisions