

## Caregiver Tip Sheet



### Don't forget to care for yourself. Here are a few tips:

When it comes to their health, caregivers are less likely than their peers to take steps to prevent or control chronic disease. Taking care of your own health will help you to better care for your loved one longer.

- Be wise – immunize.
  - Influenza (flu) vaccine: The CDC recommends that caregivers of the elderly get one each year.
  - Pneumococcal vaccination: For most caregivers, one will last a lifetime.
  - Tetanus booster: Get one every ten years.
- Don't neglect your health.
  - Get a yearly check-up and the recommended cancer screenings (mammogram, cervical screening, etc.).
  - Tell your doctor that you are a caregiver.
  - Tell your doctor if you feel depressed or nervous.
- Take some time each day to do something for yourself. Read, listen to music, telephone friends, or exercise.
- Eat healthy foods and do not skip meals.
- Find caregiver resources in your area early. You may not need their information or services now, but you will have them, when you need them.

- Don't be afraid to ask for help. And don't do it all yourself. Use your family, friends, or neighbors for support. Family may help share caregiving tasks. Friends and neighbors may help with other chores.

### Caregiving can take a toll on you!

Research suggests that the physical and emotional demands on caregivers put them at greater risk for health problems:

- Caregivers are more at risk for infectious diseases, such as colds and flu, and chronic diseases, such as heart problems, diabetes, and cancer.
- Depression is twice as common among caregivers compared to non-caregivers.

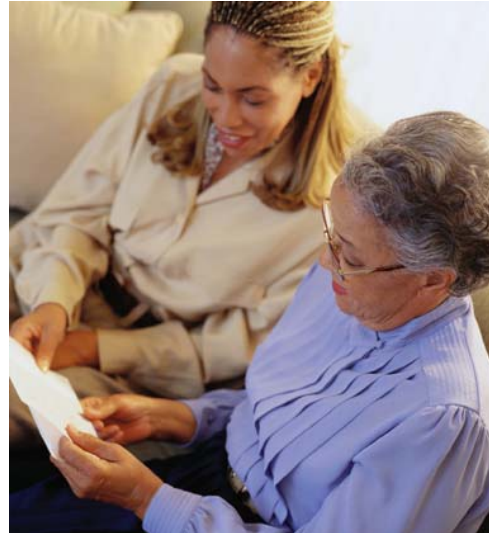


## Help for family caregivers

The National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP) started in 2000 as part of the Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act to help older adults and their families. Managed by the Administration on Aging, funds are given to aging service provider networks in all states and territories to help family caregivers with:

- **Information** about health conditions, resources and community-based long-term care services that might best meet a family's needs;
- **Assistance** in securing appropriate help;
- **Counseling**, support groups and caregiver training to help families make decisions and solve problems;
- **Respite care** so that families and other informal caregivers can be temporarily relieved from their caregiving responsibilities; and
- **Supplemental long-term care services** on a limited basis. This could include home modifications; incontinence supplies; a microwave; air conditioner (for a caregiver with asthma or allergies); nutritional supplements; washing machine; assistive devices, etc.

To access services under the National Family Caregiver Support Program contact your nearest Area Agency on Aging. The ElderCare Locator can help you find the nearest one. Call 1-800-677-1116 or visit [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov).



**Taking care of our caregivers:** November is National Family Caregivers Month. During this month we recognize the nearly 44 million Americans who care for their relatives, friends, and neighbors.

### Some facts about family caregivers

- Caregivers supply nearly 257 billion dollars a year in services for their loved ones, such as transportation, supervision, financial management, feeding, bathing, lifting, and toileting.
- Caregivers juggle many roles. Besides assisting a loved one, most are married or living with a partner, have a paid job, and care for a child or another elder.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

AoA recognizes the importance of making information readily available to consumers, professionals, researchers, and students. Our website provides information for and about older persons, their families, and professionals involved in aging programs and services. For more information about AoA, please contact: US Dept of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging, Washington, DC 20201; phone: (202) 401-4541; fax (202) 357-3560; Email: [aoainfo@aoa.gov](mailto:aoainfo@aoa.gov); or contact our website at: [www.aoa.gov](http://www.aoa.gov)