

Helping caregivers through their journey one step at a time.

Dealing with Caregiver Guilt

by Malika Brown, MSW, LSW

Caregivers often carry around undeserved guilt, believing that they aren't doing enough for their loved ones. This guilt can make the caregiving role even more stressful than it already is. One might ask why a caregiver feels guilty when they're doing such a courageous job.

Resentment for personal time lost – It's normal to feel like you're missing something when so much of your time is taken up taking care of someone else. The caregiver thinks that they shouldn't feel this way.

Unresolved issues – Many times, there are issues stemming from childhood or arguments in the past that hinder the caregiving process. Many caregivers feel guilty about this.

Comparing yourself to others – Some caregivers will look at another caregiver and think that they could never accomplish what that other person did.

Knowing placement is inevitable – There can be tremendous guilt when a caregiver has to place their loved one in assisted living or a nursing home.

Dealing with your own issues – You may be dealing with personal or health problems yourself, which takes away from your caregiving responsibilities.

Ways to Cope with Caregiver Guilt

Acknowledge the guilt – It's normal to feel guilt from time to time. Once it's recognized, we are better able to deal with it.

Look at the bigger picture – Although you may be stressed with a particular situation now, it will not last forever. Look at the sacrifices you make for your loved one and realize that you are doing a great job.

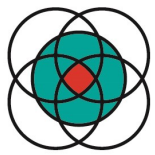
Accept that you're human and have flaws – All of us make mistakes from time to time. Some of us may be good at the physical aspects of caregiving, while others may be better able to handle the emotional toll. Recognize your strengths and don't focus on the negative.

Make time for yourself – This is easier said than done, but it's a must! Even if it's just an hour or two a week, go out and have coffee with a friend, catch a movie, attend a caregiver support group, or just curl up and read a book. Taking time out helps you put your situation in better perspective.

Know that you are making the best decision for you and your loved one at that time – This can be hard to accept, especially if you've made a promise to a loved one in the past that you can no longer keep. A change in a situation may force you to break that promise, but realize that the promise was made under different circumstances. You are making the best decision with new circumstances.

Deal with unresolved issues or accept them for what they are – Many times, we may be taking care of someone who we resent, for many reasons. You can choose to try and resolve those feelings from the past to allow you to care for that person fairly. You can also choose to allow someone else to care for that person because you know you cannot rightfully do so. Talk to a professional if necessary to make the best decision for both you and your loved one.

Reach out for support from family and friends; seek caregiver support groups or professional help to work through your feelings of guilt. Know that you are not alone in your caregiving journey and the help is available. Most of all, remember that you are doing the best that you can!



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GOODBYE APRIL!



April Showers bring May Flowers!

..... April Showers Bring May Flowers... Goodbye April...

I am a Caregiver

by [Lin M. Watkins](#)

May 11, 2017

I am a caregiver
it's what I do.
24/7, I'm here for you.

And most of the time
we do just fine
But once in a while,
I need my own time.

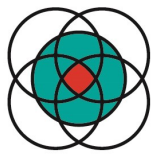
And when I take
that necessary break
I've got to remember
it's for both our sake.

I can't take care of you
unless I take care of me.
So I work very hard
at being guilt-free.

I'll always be here for you,
so don't you fret.
Together we're making
memories of us I'll never forget.

Do you have an email address? Want to receive your newsletters electronically? Please submit your email address to me for future correspondence! Email me at jferri@thrive-alliance.org.

Caregivers of Older Adults support groups are currently held the third Thursday of each month at 2:30 p.m. via Zoom. You can also join the first Thursday of every month at 3:30 p.m. via Zoom or live at the Decatur County Hospital. Relative Caregivers support groups are currently being held the second Tuesday of every month at 1:00 p.m. via Zoom. We also have a Caregiver Resources Facebook group. Email me if you would like to join.



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Building Caregiver Resilience: Nutritional Strategies for Caregivers

Author: Jane Meyer Hamilton

- Sandy stops by to make dinner for her disabled parents after work each night, but usually skips dinner when she gets home.
- Lois is so stressed by her husband's stroke that her weight has shot up and she can't seem to control her diabetes with diet like she used to do.
- Roger is so worn-out by caring for his wife who has dementia that hot dogs or canned soup are about all he can put on the table for dinner.

How about you? Are the chronic stresses of caregiving leading you to skip meals, eat more junk food, and lose or gain weight? When a caregiver focuses on a loved one's needs, there seems to be less and less time for healthy self-care. Neglecting health-promoting behaviors is unhealthy, and can lead to physical and emotional problems. Fortunately, these negative consequences can be addressed with some resilience-building strategies that don't take much time and energy. Good nutrition is one of them.

How Good Nutrition Helps Caregivers

Nutritious eating promotes good health, building strength and stamina needed for providing care. It helps decrease a caregiver's risk for developing minor ailments or more serious chronic illnesses. And good nutrition strengthens the immune system's ability to fight those illnesses that arise.

Poor nutrition leads to fatigue and illness, increasing the risk for serious health problems. It leads to longer recovery times, increased risk of infections and greater risk of falls. Choosing nutritious food is one of the most powerful things a caregiver can do to stay healthy, build resilience and continue caring.

A resilient caregiver eats a healthy diet. (For more: <http://www.weightandwellness.com/resources/articles-and-videos/articles-about-other-health-conditions/nutrition-the-foundation-of-self-care-for-caregivers/>)

Nutritional Strategies that Work

Research shows that good nutrition for caregivers is based on healthful food choices and eating behaviors. Take these three steps toward better nutrition:

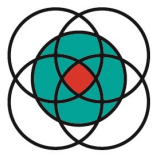
Eat a Balanced Diet: A well balanced diet provides the energy and nutrients your body needs to function, remain healthy, and grow. Guidelines at www.ChooseMyPlate.gov emphasize:

- Choosing colorful fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean fish and poultry, low-fat dairy products.
- Limiting red meat, sugar, salt or saturated fats like butter.
- Controlling portion size, sugary drinks, and the quantity of snacks or comfort foods.

The [Mayo Clinic](http://www.mayoclinic.org) adds that drinking at least eight 8-ounce glasses of fluid a day is another important part of a healthy diet.

In The National Institutes of Health's e-book, [What's on Your Plate: Smart Food Choices for Healthy Aging](http://www.nationalinstitutesofhealth.gov/publications/whatsonyourplate), you can learn all the basics about food types, recommended daily calories, portion size, sample menus, and overcoming roadblocks to healthy eating.

Select Healthy Snacks: Though often discouraged, eating between meals can actually be good for holding off hunger and keeping energy high. The trick is to choose wisely and eat in moderation. Look for foods that are proteins, fresh fruits or vegetables, whole grains or low-fat dairy, rather than simple starches, refined sugars or processed foods. For a list of healthy snacks recommended by the American Heart Association, follow this link: <http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/HealthyEating/Healthy->



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ThriveAlliance Caregiver Connection

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Extension - Nutrition
Education Program



Baked Zucchini Sticks

- 4 medium zucchini
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/4 cup finely grated parmesan cheese
- 1 1/2 cups bread crumbs
- 1 tablespoon dry Italian herbs

1. Cut zucchini into long sticks, about 3 inches long.
2. Microwave zucchini for about 3 minutes. Pat zucchini sticks dry with a paper towel.
3. Mix eggs and water together in a small bowl. Mix cheese, bread crumbs and herbs together in another small bowl.
4. Dip zucchini sticks first into the egg mixture and then into the bread crumb mixture.
5. Arrange zucchini in rows on a metal baking sheet that has been sprayed with cooking spray. Broil zucchini sticks for about 12 to 15 minutes, turning once while cooking.
6. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Recipe adapted from Nutrition Matters.



Prep time:

20 minutes



Cook time:

15 minutes



Servings:

8 cups