



Caregiver's Answers, Topics, and Helpful Information

In an endeavor to continually assist caregivers in their search for pertinent information regarding eldercare, our Information and Referral Specialists address topics of most frequently asked questions via Caregiver's Answers, Topics and Helpful Information (CATHI). Additionally, caregivers are also invited to e-mail individual questions and an Information and Referral Specialist will reply.

Caring For Yourself While Caring for a Loved One with Cancer

Caregiving for someone with cancer presents its own unique challenges. Cancer treatments can be technical, with lengthy and very specific directions. Often, decisions about short-term care, long-term care, and even hospice and death planning, may arise. Even for short-term care needs, the caregiver can be challenged with fatigue, conflicts with work or school, a sense of being overwhelmed by the volume of tasks to be preformed, doubts of personal skills, stamina, and knowledge, and issues related to the caregiver's own life. Below are a few tips to help you care for your loved one while caring for yourself.

Tell the care recipient's treatment team (social workers, nurses, physician, etc.) about your family's specific situation. Include details about how prepared you feel for the role of caregivers. This can help the treatment team aim discussion and suggestions at a level you feel comfortable with.

Inform the treatment team of the emotional, community, and financial resources (or lack of resources) available to you and your family. This information will help the treatment team when considering options for your home-care situation.

If you don't understand something that has been suggested or implemented by the treatment team, do not be afraid to ask questions. Cancer caregivers can be precise and very technical. It is to your benefit and that of the care recipient to understand care instructions.

Pay attention to your spiritual self. Caregiving may trigger spiritual questions within the caregiver and care recipient.

Conduct important discussions, such as those about treatment and prognosis, in privacy and without interruption. These are important matters that deserve to be considered without outside distractions.

Pay attention to your feelings. As a result of the strain of caregiving, caregivers may experience symptoms of depression and anxiety as well as a sense of helplessness and fear. If you experience symptoms of any of these emotions, talk with your physician about how you address them.

Make financial preparations, if possible. If caregiving situations go on for an extended period, many families find their financial coffers depleted. While there is not usually much that can be done to increase income or savings, it might be helpful to check into assistance programs, should they be needed.

This article was adapted from the pamphlet *Caring for Yourself While Helping a Loved one with Cancer* created by Carrah L. Martin, BS Rosalynn Carter Institute Fellow, 2004.

Note: This is for informational purposes only.

For referrals to community organizations in Guilford County that assist older adults and caregivers with these documents, contact Senior Resources of Guilford's SeniorLine at (336) 884-6981 in High Point, all other areas (336) 333-6981 or the Caregiver Support Coordinator, at (336) 373-4816 or (336) 883-3586 in High Point.



North Carolina Family Caregiver Support Program
Completing the Care