

Care for the caregiver

Recent studies have identified a new syndrome called "caregiver burnout" the gradual wearing down of one's physical and emotional resources.

Burnout warning signs include the following:

You eat fast, drink or smoke more than usual

You're exhausted most of the time

You have bad or recurring nightmares

You sweat or have chills.

You have developed hives, itchy skin or rash

You become accident prone

You are nervous

You feel frustrated, angry or troubled

You experience deep fears

You experience panic and your heart pounds

To reduce stress:

Eat well and get adequate rest

Take time for exercise

Do not withdraw from friends and relatives

Find a friendly, listening ear

Read for fun and to get away from yourself

If religious affiliation is important, be involved

Find time to laugh

Remember, you can't be all things to all people all the time.

There are many ways for relatives or friends to provide emotional and physical support to prevent caregiver burnout.

Examples include:

- Personal hygiene
- Washing clothes
- Changing bed linens
- House cleaning
- Grocery shopping
- Transporting
- Assisting with medications

Also consider:

- Adult day care
- A short term respite stay at a facility
- Hiring help in the home

Courtesy Alzheimer's Association
Marquette-Alger County (MI) Chapter