

Stay healthy while helping others

It's easy to neglect your health and wellness while taking care of a loved one with cognitive impairment. Taking care of yourself is important for you and can also help you better care for your loved one.

Here's eight tips to help:

- 1 Move.** Set aside time to stay physically active doing something you enjoy each day. This can include a walk, gardening, or exercising with others.
- 2 Eat a balanced diet.** Try eating a diet high in fruits and vegetables and low in sugar and processed foods.
- 3 Get enough rest.** Aim to get eight hours of sleep a night. If you are having trouble getting or falling to sleep, or if you are waking up still tired, talk with your doctor.
- 4 Visit your healthcare professional to help maintain your health.** Discuss stress, coping, and your emotions to get connected to additional support or treatments that can help.
- 5 Use relaxation techniques.**
 - **Visualization:** Picture a place or situation that is calm or peaceful.
 - **Meditation:** Ground thoughts in the present by connecting with your body and breath. See these examples: qrco.de/Caregiver_meditation
 - **Breathing exercises:** Take slow, even breaths, or try "box breathing" (for each step, count 4 seconds: (slowly breathe in, hold the breath, slowly breathe out, hold the breath))
- 6 Learn more about caregiving for patients with dementia.** Caregiving needs change as dementia progresses. Education is available at the Alzheimer's Association (alz.org) and DementiaFriendsPA.org
- 7 Find time for yourself.** Caregiving can be exhausting. Schedule time to do things you enjoy. To make that possible, here are resources that may offer you help with supervising your family member for short periods:
 - Pennsylvania Adult Day Centers: qrco.de/PDA_adult_daycare
 - Respite care: qrco.de/Alz_respites_care
 - Local Area Agency on Aging: qrco.de/PDA_AAA
 - Eldercare locator: eldercare.acl.gov 800-677-1116
 - Additional resources:

- 8 Get tools to plan care needs.** Keeping a written record of appointments, healthcare professionals, medications, and other care needs can save you time and improve care. A tool from the CDC is available at: qrco.de/CDCCaregiver_plan

PA CareKit

Take the quiz to be linked with care resources for your specific needs and situation.

pa.gov/agencies/aging/pa-carekit/caregiving-resources



Bringing unbiased evidence to clinical care

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These are general recommendations only; specific medical decisions should be made by the treating clinician based on an individual patient's clinical condition.

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