

Welcome to Caregiving: A Compassionate Guide to Starting Strong



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CARING TOGETHER. STRONGER TOGETHER.

Welcome Message

Becoming a caregiver is one of the most meaningful and selfless roles a person can take on. Yet it's also one of the most demanding. You may feel a mix of gratitude, love, exhaustion, worry, or even fear. That's completely normal.

At Assurance, we understand how complex the caregiving journey can be — because we've seen it firsthand. This guide was created to help you start strong, stay organized, and remember one very important truth: you are not alone.

Inside, you'll find practical tools, gentle encouragement, and printable forms to help you manage daily responsibilities while caring for your own well-being. Whether you've just begun or have been caregiving for years, we hope this resource helps you feel more confident, supported, and at peace.

Understanding the Caregiver Journey

Caregiving is both a calling and a commitment. It may look different for everyone — a spouse caring for a partner, a child helping a parent, a friend supporting a loved one through illness — but the heart behind it is the same: love.

In the beginning, it's natural to feel uncertain. You might feel:

- Overwhelmed by new responsibilities
- Frustrated when plans fall through
- Guilty for needing rest
- Grateful for small wins
- Hopeful for better days ahead

Most caregivers find that negative emotions like stress or fatigue show up more easily than peace or joy. That's because caregiving often starts suddenly, without preparation. But with time, support, and planning, positive emotions—like peace, strength, fulfillment, and even joy—can become part of your daily experience too. This guide is here to help you find that balance.

Basic Caregiving Tips

Every caregiving journey is different, but a few basic practices can make a big difference as you begin.

A. Care Tasks

Start simple and build your routine over time.

- **Medication:** Keep a written list of medications, doses, and schedules.
- **Appointments:** Use a calendar or planner to track visits and tests.
- **Personal Care:** Maintain dignity and comfort by preparing ahead for bathing, dressing, and meals.
- **Transportation:** Plan ahead for safe travel to appointments or errands.

B. Supportive Habits

Your mindset and organization can help you stay steady.

- **Stay Organized:** Keep a single notebook or binder for all notes, lists, and paperwork.
- **Communicate Clearly:** Share updates with doctors, family, or helpers regularly.
- **Practice Self-Awareness:** Check in with your emotions each day — and give yourself grace.
- **Allow Flexibility:** Care plans may need adjusting; that's part of the process.

You don't have to do everything perfectly or all at once. Focus on what matters most today, and the rest will come with time.

Self-Care Strategies

It may feel impossible to care for yourself while caring for someone else. *But remember: you can't pour from an empty cup.*

Try a few small, realistic self-care steps:

- **Hydrate:** Keep a water bottle nearby.
- **Breathe:** Take three slow, deep breaths whenever stress builds.
- **Rest:** Even short breaks count — step outside for fresh air or enjoy a quiet cup of tea.
- **Ask for Help:** Accept help when offered; don't wait until you're overwhelmed.

Closing Thought:

Even the best-laid plans may go astray. You might set aside time for self-care and then have to tend to an emergency instead. That's okay. Keep trying, adjust as needed, and find what works best for you. Every small act of care for yourself matters.

How to Ask for Help

It's common for caregivers to hear, "Let me know if you need anything." Yet in the moment, it can be hard to respond. That's where a little preparation helps.

Here are some simple ways to make asking for help easier:

- Be specific about what would truly help (meals, errands, short visits).
- Keep a short list of tasks you can share when someone offers.
- Remember: accepting help gives others the gift of serving, too.

To make this even easier, we've included a "How to Help Me" form you can fill out and share with friends or family who want to support you. Print a few copies and keep them handy — you never know when someone's kind offer will come at just the right time.

Forms & Templates

These printable pages are designed to help you stay organized and reduce stress:

Medication List

Record medication names, dosages, schedules, prescribing doctors, and any notes or side effects.

Doctor Contact Sheet

Keep track of your loved one's healthcare team, including specialists, phone numbers, addresses, and appointment notes.

How to Help Me Form

List meaningful ways others can assist — like providing a meal, running errands, or giving you a short break. Space is included to note who's helping and when.

(Each form will be a separate printable sheet at the end of this guide.)

Closing Encouragement

You are doing something extraordinary — giving your time, energy, and love to someone who needs you. Even on the hardest days, your care makes a difference.

Remember, caregiving isn't meant to be walked alone. Assurance is here to remind you that support, community, and compassion are always within reach.

Visit our website for upcoming programs, including the Caregiver's Check-In Call and Annual Caregiver's Festival, and explore more free caregiver resources designed with you in mind. You are seen. You are valued. You are not alone.

Call to Action

Join Our Facebook Group - The Caregiver's Promise to connect with others who understand what you're going through.

Register for Upcoming Events to share, learn, and find encouragement each week.

Download More Resources at www.assurancegn.org to explore devotionals, checklists, and self-care tools from Assurance.

Medication List

Use this form to keep track of all medications, dosages, schedules, prescribing doctors, and notes.

[illegible]

Doctor Contact Sheet

Keep all your loved one's healthcare contacts organized in one place.

[illegible]

How to Help Me Form

Fill out this form to guide friends and family in helping you effectively.

Name of Caregiver / Loved One: _____

Preferred Contact: _____

Ways Others Can Help Me:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Notes / Special Instructions:

How to Help Me Form

Fill out this form to guide friends and family in helping you effectively.

Name of Caregiver / Loved One: _____

Preferred Contact: _____

Ways Others Can Help Me:

1. Bring a dinner meal on Wednesdays.
2. Watch my dad for 2 hours so I can run errands.
3. Pick up prescriptions from the pharmacy when needed.
4. Sit and talk with me once a week to check in.
5. Help me organize medical bills and paperwork.

Notes / Special Instructions:

- Dad prefers quiet activities and dislikes loud music.
- Meals that are easy to reheat are best.
- Please text before coming over to check timing.

Examples of Ways Others Can Help

Daily Tasks

- Prepare a meal or bring groceries once a week.
- Pick up prescriptions or household supplies.
- Help with laundry or light housekeeping.
- Water plants or care for pets.
- Run errands like picking up dry cleaning or mailing packages.

Transportation & Appointments

- Drive to doctor or therapy appointments.
- Provide rides to social events or support groups.
- Accompany to hospital visits for moral support.

Child or Family Care

- Watch children for a few hours to allow rest or appointments.
- Help with school pick-ups or drop-offs.
- Assist other family members with tasks to lighten the load.

Emotional Support

- Send a text or call to check in regularly.
- Sit and listen without offering advice.
- Encourage a short walk or brief outing for a change of scenery.

Home & Safety

- Help organize paperwork, bills, or medical forms.
- Assist with minor home repairs or tasks that feel overwhelming.
- Ensure safety by installing grab bars, decluttering, or preparing simple accessibility solutions.

Self-Care Encouragement

- Offer a short break: take the care recipient for an outing while the caregiver rests.
- Bring a coffee, treat, or small gift to brighten the day.
- Help schedule appointments for the caregiver's own medical check-ups.

Daily Tasks

- Prepare a meal or bring groceries once a week.