

Parkinson Disease: Coping Tips for Caregivers



In the early stages of Parkinson disease, your loved one can likely handle most tasks without help. But over time, you may find yourself taking on more and more responsibilities. Keep in mind that you can't take good care of someone else if you don't take care of yourself, too. So be sure to take breaks when you need them. It's not being selfish. It's vital.

Give yourself a break

It's OK to spend time outside your role as caregiver. It may not feel right at first. But even simple things can help ease stress. Try these tips:

- Go to a movie or concert.
- Have a meal with friends.
- Read a book or write in a journal.
- Take a walk or do another type of exercise.
- Pursue a hobby.
- Take a long bath.

Know the signs of depression

Taking care of your loved one may leave you feeling frustrated, sad, or worn out. This isn't a sign you're doing something wrong. It's completely normal. However, be on the lookout for signs of depression. These include:

- Feeling sad, guilty, tired, or helpless most of the time
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Loss of interest in activities
- Eating too little or too much

If you notice any of these signs in yourself, or in your loved one, talk with a provider. Depression can and should be treated.

Get support

Caring for someone with Parkinson disease takes more than a single person. So learn to accept help when it's offered. And ask for help when you need it. People who care about you and your loved one really do want to help. You can also talk with the provider or a social worker about options for temporary help (respite care). This can range from adult daycare to a home healthcare aide, who will care for your loved one a few times each month. Join a support group to share your experiences.

© 2000-2027 The StayWell Company, LLC. All rights reserved. This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Always follow your healthcare professional's instructions
This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Always follow your Healthcare professional's instructions. Copyright Krames LLC.