

Care for the caregiver

Are you a caregiver for someone with cystic fibrosis (CF)?
If you are, this flashcard is all about you.

What type of caregiver are you?

If you care for a baby or young child, you may be responsible for their physical care and emotional support. Or you may be helping an older child or an adult navigate life with CF. Caring for a person with CF can be rewarding, but it can also be challenging and stressful, which is why parents of children with cystic fibrosis have higher rates of depression than parents of healthy children.

Why is it so important to take care of *yourself*?

Caring for yourself is one of the most important things you can do, but caregivers often ignore their own needs. Remember, **self-care is not selfish. It is crucial.** Taking steps to take care of yourself can help you, your loved one, and the rest of your family.

Caregiving shows love and commitment, but constant care demands can take their toll on you over time. Many caregivers, finding it hard to pay attention to their own health and well-being, allow their problems to build up over time.

When you recognize your own needs, you can ask for help

It's not always easy to know what *you* want and need as a family caregiver. A first step might be to make an *I Need* list. You may want to share your *I Need* list with family and friends. That way they will know how and when to help you.

In the boxes below, you will find examples.

I Need help with

- Grocery shopping and meal prep
- Taking care of the house and garden
- Walking the dog

I Need time to

- Go to the doctor
- Take a nap
- Walk in the park

Taking action can help reduce stress



The following tips can help you avoid becoming overwhelmed:

- Get help early
- Keep a journal
- Reach out to friends and family
- Manage your time and energy



There are different types of therapy that may help reduce stress and anxiety. Some examples are:

- Massage
- Yoga or tai chi
- Meditation or guided visualization
- Deep-breathing exercises

Knowledge is power

Learning about CF may help you better understand what's happening now and what you can expect over time. Knowledge can help you communicate better with CF care team members. It may help improve your confidence as a caregiver. Being in-the-know helps you speak on behalf of your child or the person you care for.

There are in-person or online caregiver support groups. You can meet people who understand what you are going through. You may also learn caregiving tips and new ways to cope.

