

Caregiver Stress

Caregiving can affect a person's health, so it's important to know your limits and monitor your stress level and emotions. Physical effects of caregiver stress can include a compromised immune system; an increased risk of heart disease, headaches, digestive problems, and insomnia; and overall poor health. Emotional effects of caregiver stress can include social withdrawal, irritability, problems at work, problems concentrating, and anger or negative thoughts about the one for whom you are caring. Mental effects of caregiver stress can include depression, anxiety, and feelings of burden or guilt. Feelings of helplessness, depression, guilt, anger, and resentment can all lead to caregiver stress and burnout.

The following Caregiver Stress Questionnaire can help you determine if you are experiencing caregiver stress.

Caregiver Stress Questionnaire			
<i>Are the following statements true?</i>			
<i>Please place a check in the appropriate box to indicate your answer (Yes, it is true OR No, it is not true):</i>			
	Yes	No	Comments
I have frequent headaches, stomachaches, or other physical health problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I am easily irritated, angered, or saddened.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I do not have much interest in activities I used to enjoy, such as reading, walking, or visiting with friends.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I have recently experienced unplanned weight gain or loss.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I feel tired or without energy most of the time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I get too much sleep.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I do not get enough sleep.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

If you answered YES to more than two questions, you might be experiencing caregiver stress. Sometimes we do not realize how much stress can affect our physical, emotional, and mental health. Remember, you are not alone. Seek the assistance of a health care provider, skilled advisor, or caregiver support group.

Your eldercare benefit pairs you with a Health Care Manager – an experienced nurse – who has helped many caregivers deal with difficult eldercare situations. Your Health Care Manager can help if:

- you feel overwhelmed by your caregiving responsibilities and need someone to talk to
- you need help putting together a formal care plan and engaging other family members and friends in the caregiving effort
- you need help evaluating the respite care options available to you
- you want new ideas or approaches for talking with your loved one about their situation and getting him or her to accept your help

Call 800-970-7131 to meet your Health Care Manager.