

CARING FOR THE CAREGIVER: SELF-CARE

Caring for a family member with mesothelioma can come with a range of responsibilities. Caregivers often provide physical and emotional support to the patient.

To be a good caregiver, you must take care of yourself and make time for yourself. A caregiver's emotional, physical and mental health are key elements to their loved ones well-being.

Who is a caregiver?

A caregiver is a family member or friend who provides continuous ($\geq 50\%$ /treatment time) care and support throughout treatment.

This support can include:

- Scheduling of appointments.
- Keeping track of medications.
- Providing emotional support.
- Keeping track of finances.

It is normal for family and friends to process a loved one's diagnosis of mesothelioma differently, and to require various lengths of time to cope. Family dynamics may shift, for familial responsibilities may alter to accommodate for the loved one's treatment and diagnosis. Preparing for these changes, while difficult, can help manage the adjustments one may have to make.

Acknowledge your emotions

Know your strengths as a caregiver but accept that you have real limits on what you can do alone. Keeping a journal with questions you have about your loved one's diagnosis can help organize thoughts, regain feelings of proactivity, and increase your knowledge about how to provide the best support.

Ask for help

It is normal to feel overwhelmed with providing care to your loved one. Ask family and friends to help with completing smaller tasks, and if necessary, seek help for yourself. Feelings of anxiety or depression are normal when providing support, and it is important to prioritize care for yourself. Talking with a therapist could help you process emotions and focus on your mental health.

Inspire independence

As your loved one continues treatment, encourage them to explore new hobbies and enjoyments. Work on establishing a "new normal," and find different ways to regain independence. Discouraging complete reliance on one another can maintain a healthy relationship and provide emotional stability.