

PLANNING CARE MANAGEMENT

Scheduling and Planning

Your to-do list might seem endless in the beginning stages of diagnosis, and it can be difficult to feel organized. Acknowledge that you are doing the very best that you can, and do not be afraid to ask for help from loved ones. Family and friends can help alleviate the stresses of daily tasks, such as laundry or food shopping, and can provide relief during demanding times. Here are some tips to help you organize your loved one's care management:

- Delegate tasks. You can have siblings or adult children handle medical bills, or pick up prescriptions.
- In the beginning, set a limit for having "me time." It is important to keep up with your own needs as you help your loved one with theirs.
- Write everything down regardless of priority or order. Seeing everything on one page can help you conceptualize the order of your to-do list.
- Make two to-do lists if you have a large quantity of tasks. One list will be a high priority list, and the other list will be a secondary task list. This can help break up your tasks so that they are less overwhelming to accomplish.
- Include your own appointments and commitments on your weekly schedule as to not forget your own obligations.
- Take breaks. If a task is becoming frustrating, such as filling out forms, step outside for some air, watch some TV, or begin another task. To lower your stress, acknowledge that it is okay to step away from a task, and come back with a fresh mind.
- Plan ahead. Sit down at the beginning of each week, and create a schedule for yourself. This will help organize paperwork for a doctor appointment later in the week, or ensure somebody can come help with your loved one if you have a previous commitment. This will help alleviate last-minute stress and anxiety.
- Organize paperwork as soon as you receive it. This will prevent frustrations of misplacement, and lessen future anxieties.
- Manage your expectations, and expect roadblocks. Sometimes, tasks will not be accomplished with the same standard of quality, and that's okay. Praise yourself for what you did accomplish, and continue moving forward.

Keeping Track of Medications

It is normal to feel overwhelmed when organizing medications that your loved one is taking. Here are some tips to help you navigate medications:

- Keep a running list of all medications your loved one is taking, and include specific details such as the dosage, frequency, any side effects, purpose of the medication, directions, start and end date, and phone number of pharmacy. You can keep your own journal, and/or download a chart to fill out here: <http://caregiveraction.org/medication-checklist>
- Keep copies of all prescriptions and laboratory results that you can easily reference if necessary.
- Organize your notes consistently. Some choose to organize in a binder, on the computer, in an online portal, or in a notebook. Discuss this with your doctor.
- Make sure you clearly understand why your loved one is on each medication from your doctor.
- Understand how to combat potential side effects from the medication. Ask your doctor what symptoms to look for, and if/when you should call for medical help.
- Do not flush medications down the toilet. Ask your pharmacist about how to properly dispose of medications.