

WELL BALANCED^o

Finding Balance:

GUIDANCE FOR CAREGIVERS AND SUPPORT FOR DIABETES PREVENTION

November is known to be a time to show gratitude, extend generosity, and ring in the fall and winter holidays, and while some people may be feeling especially generous, one population of people that may be feeling overextended and burned out during this time of year are family caregivers.

November is National Family Caregivers Month, a month to recognize and honor family caregivers for their dedication, love, and generous support.

Family caregivers are spouses, partners, relatives, friends, or neighbors who provide physical or social assistance and care for someone close to them who may have a disability, an illness, or need assistance with daily tasks. Family caregivers aren't paid for this labor and they don't typically have any formal training in caregiving.

- » In 2019, the CDC found that 22.3% of adults in the U.S. reported providing care or assistance to a friend or family member in the past 30 days.⁽¹⁾
- » 1 in 3 caregivers reported providing 20 or more hours per week of care, and over half have given care or assistance for 24 months or more.⁽¹⁾
- » In 2016, 64 million Americans (1 in 5) lived in multi-generational households.⁽²⁾

Much of the time, caregivers work full-time jobs while also carrying the full-time mental load of caring for others. This can result in additional strain on caregivers and can lead to caregiver burnout.

Here are some tips for preventing burnout and practicing self-care that apply to anyone that provides care for others:

Know Your Resources

- » Talk to your employer about resources available to help you care for yourself and others. They may be able to offer you a flexible work schedule, FMLA, short-term leave, support through your Employee Assistance Program (EAP), or local resources/networking with other caregivers.
- » Make a plan to have a backup caregiver in case you need to be unavailable or take caregiving breaks.
- » Local senior centers and mental health counselors can provide support in managing the stress of caregiving.

Prioritize Your Well-Being

- » You can't pour from an empty cup. Take the time necessary to care for your mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, social, intellectual, and financial health.
- » Staying active, eating a balanced diet, making time for social interaction, practicing mindfulness, and getting adequate sleep can go a long way.

Be Kind to Yourself

- » You're carrying a heavier load than some. Be kind to yourself and give grace to yourself when circumstances are difficult.
- » Don't hold yourself to too high a standard for caregiving. You're not perfect, and you're likely doing the best you can.
- » Learn to let go of circumstances that are out of your control.
- » Take notice of your emotional state and find healthy ways to cope with difficult emotions.
- » Ensure you have a support system to lean on and talk to.

November is a great time to shine a light on caregivers and it is also a month to raise awareness about diabetes.

Diabetes is a chronic condition that affects millions of people around the world, but with the right tools and support, it can be managed and even prevented.

There are two main types of diabetes.

Type 1: An autoimmune disorder in which the body mistakenly destroys insulin-producing cells. Its causes are not fully known and there is currently no cure. People affected by type 1 diabetes are dependent on insulin to survive.

Type 2: A metabolic disorder in which a person's body still produces insulin but is unable to use it effectively. Type 2 diabetes can be managed with diet, exercise, medication, and sometimes insulin therapy.^[3]

While type 1 diabetes cannot be prevented or cured, type 2 diabetes may be prevented by:

- » Maintaining a healthy weight
- » Exercising regularly
- » Eating a healthy balanced diet, rich in healthy fats, proteins, fruits, and vegetables, and low in processed and sugary foods
- » Seeing your doctor annually for check-ups on blood sugar levels to get ahead of any risk of pre-diabetes.^[4]

Whether you're focusing on finding a more balanced caregiving system or working toward a healthier physical lifestyle, with the right tools and support, you can take back some control of your ability to amplify your well-being and live a happier, healthier life.



Want more resources on family caregiving or diabetes?

Talk to your employer to find out what is available to you through your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or employee wellness program.



^[3] <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/caregiving/caregiver-brief.html> ^[2] <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/04/05/a-record-64-million-americans-live-in-multigenerational-households> ^[3] <https://www.jdrf.org/11d-resources/about>
^[4] <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/type-2-diabetes/in-depth/diabetes-prevention/art-20047639>