



Share the Wellness Tip Fit Fact



December 28, 2012

Care-givers Need Caring, Too

In the rush of the holiday season, most people have additional activities and tasks on their to-do list. But the everyday chores and responsibilities are still there. In many households another layer is added to the mix – care-giving.

A care-giver is anyone who helps someone, usually an elderly or sick parent, with their basic daily tasks. Care-givers often help with grocery shopping, house cleaning, taking medicine and paying bills. Some care-givers have the physical challenges of helping the person they are caring for dress and bathe themselves.

The care of elderly or sick relatives often falls to women. Some care-givers have children to care for in addition to older relatives. But care-giving without relief can harm mental and physical health. It can raise blood pressure, interfere with sleep, cause fatigue, increase the risk of illness or injury and trigger depression or anxiety.

Help for the care-giver:

- ♥ **Get moving.** Care-givers who exercised four times weekly for at least 30 minutes slept much better than non-exercisers. Exercise also curbed stress-related jumps in blood pressure.
- ♥ **Get together.** Social support may ease the stress associated with care-giving. Join a support group, or make a special effort to see friends regularly.
- ♥ **Get wired.** Participate in an online discussion group for care-givers.
- ♥ **Get relief.** You deserve time to visit a friend, read a book, and do other things for yourself. Friends, relatives, social-service agencies, and religious groups may be able to help out with duties.



**StartUp
Health**™

Visit the [Be Smart. Be Well.](#) Website to learn more about care-giving and other selected topics. You can watch videos, read the latest news, take quizzes and find additional resources and information to help you understand and manage your care-giving options.

Sources: [Be Smart. Be Well.](#), [Womenshealth.gov](#), [American Psychological Association](#).