



womenshealth.gov

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Caregiver Stress

Q: What is a caregiver?

A: A caregiver is anyone who provides help to another person in need. Usually, the person receiving care has a condition such as dementia, cancer, or brain injury and needs help with basic daily tasks. Caregivers help with many things such as:

- grocery shopping
- house cleaning
- cooking
- shopping
- paying bills
- giving medicine
- bathing
- using the toilet
- dressing
- eating

People who are not paid to provide care are known as informal caregivers or family caregivers. The most common type of informal caregiving relationship is an adult child caring for an elderly parent. Other types of caregiving relationships include:

- adults caring for other relatives, such as grandparents, siblings, aunts, and uncles
- spouses caring for elderly husbands or wives
- middle-aged parents caring for severely disabled adult children

- adults caring for friends and neighbors
- children caring for a disabled parent or elderly grandparent

Q: Who are our nation's caregivers?

A: Most Americans will be informal caregivers at some point during their lives. During any given year, there are more than 44 million Americans (21% of the adult population) who provide unpaid care to an elderly or disabled person 18 years or older. Altogether, informal caregivers provide 80 percent of the long-term care in the United States.

- Sixty-one percent of caregivers are women.
- Most caregivers are middle-aged.
- Thirteen percent of caregivers are aged 65 years and older.
- Fifty-nine percent of informal caregivers have jobs in addition to caring for another person. Because of time spent caregiving, more than half of employed women caregivers have made changes at work, such as going in late, leaving early, or working fewer hours.

Q: What is caregiver stress?

A: Caregiver stress is the emotional and physical strain of caregiving. It can take many forms. For instance, you may feel:

- frustrated and angry taking care of someone with dementia who often wanders away or becomes easily upset
- guilty because you think that you should be able to provide better care, despite all the other things that you have to do

