

MENTAL HEALTH



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6 smart caregiving tips

Being a caregiver can take a toll on your own well-being. Use these tips for easing stress and finding support for both you and your loved one.

Family caregivers spend an average of 23.7 hours per week providing care. If the caregiver lives with their loved one, that number jumps to 37.4 hours per week. That's basically a full-time job. It leaves very little time to take care of yourself and your own life's to-dos. It can take a toll on your mental and physical health as well.

So what are some ways to get it all done efficiently? How can you stay on top of your own well-being? We asked a caregiving pro to share the secrets she has learned along the way.

1 Cluster doctor visits

"We try to schedule as many appointments in the same week as possible," says Rebecca Foreaker. Foreaker is a nurse from Lehigh, Pennsylvania, who cares for her elderly grandmother.

"We write down any questions for the doctors. And we usually schedule any ordered tests ASAP," Foreaker says. Dragging it out is more stressful for both the caregiver and their loved one, she adds.

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Caregiving story continued

2 Organize a medication schedule

Making several pharmacy trips can eat up a lot of time. So can trying to track down a lot of mail-order packages.

Work with your loved one's doctor and pharmacist to get all their medications on the same 90-day refill schedule. Then turn to a pill organizer to help you keep track of daily doses, says Foreaker.

3 Look for community resources

There may be organizations in your area that offer services like meal delivery, transportation or adult activities. These resources can help take some pressure off caregivers.

Check with your town or county's agency on aging or senior services to see what's available. Talk to local religious and church groups, too. They often offer services for homebound seniors.

Also, don't forget to find some support for yourself. Look into joining a support group. Talking with others who know what you're going through can help ease stress. Plus, they may have new ideas and solutions for issues you're facing.

4 Let your children help

Foreaker often brings her children to her grandmother's home. She lets them help with vacuuming or cleaning out the refrigerator.

"It gets things done, and she likes giving them a few dollars for it. It makes her feel good," says Foreaker. It's also time Foreaker can share with her children, rather than being away from them.

5 Get backup help

Caregiver burnout is real. It can affect your mental health and your relationship with your loved one. It's important to get backup help so that you can have a break.

Ask other family members or friends if they would be willing to help out. They could help with tasks like errands or meal prep. Consider using a respite service, like an adult day care center.

6 Share time beyond caregiving

Staying connected on the little things — beyond their health and your caregiving to-dos — can help keep your bond strong.

Caregiving is tough and stressful at times. But it's also very rewarding, Foreaker says. Although her nursing background has helped her prepare, she says that anyone can do it if their heart is in it.



What is an advance directive?

A time may come when you're too sick to talk to your primary care provider, family or friends about the type of health care you want. That's why you need an advance directive. It's a legal document that spells out what care you want — and don't want. There are two main types of advance directives:

- **Living will:** This gives legal instructions for your care.
- **Health care power of attorney:** This lets you name someone you trust to make health care decisions for you if you aren't able to do so.

Your provider can tell you more about advance directives. You can change your decisions at any time. Be sure to give copies to your family, your provider and the person you name as your health care agent.



Managing diabetes and hypertension

Diabetes and high blood pressure (also called hypertension) often go hand in hand. Together these two illnesses can raise your risk of heart disease, kidney disease, vision problems and more. The good news? These lifestyle changes that help manage diabetes can also help lower your blood pressure.

Add fruits and veggies

What you eat affects your blood sugar and blood pressure. High fiber fruits and veggies can help lower blood sugar. They're also high in potassium. Eating more potassium and less sodium (from salty foods) helps lower your blood pressure. Start by adding one more fruit or vegetable to each meal.

Take a walk

Exercise is one of the best ways to improve your health. 30 to 45 minutes of walking (or other activity) most days can help lower blood pressure and manage diabetes. Start by adding a walk after lunch or dinner to your routine. Exercising after a meal can lower your post-meal blood sugar.

Shed a few pounds

You don't have to be "the biggest loser" — dropping just a few pounds of weight can lead to lower blood pressure and lower A1c (a measure of blood sugar). Diet and exercise can help you lose weight. Talk to your doctor about other weight loss strategies.

We're here for you

Member Services:

1-855-232-3596 (TTY: 711)

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

24-hour Nurse Line:

1-855-232-3596 (TTY: 711)

Vision care:

MARCH Vision Care

1-844-686-2724

(TTY: 1-877-627-2456)

Dental care:

LIBERTY Dental Plan

1-855-225-1727 (TTY: 711)

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8 AM–8 PM

Transportation:

Modivcare

(medical transportation only)

1-866-527-9933

(TTY: 1-866-288-3133)

Access Link

(nonmedical transportation)

973-491-4224

(TTY: 1-800-955-6765)

Stop elder abuse. If you see signs of abuse or neglect of an older person, contact your local Adult Protective Services, Long-Term Care Ombudsman or the police. Visit nia.nih.gov/health/topics/elder-abuse to learn more about elder abuse.

How to lower your fall risk

One out of four adults age 65 or older falls each year. Falling can lead to injuries like broken bones or concussions. These health checks can help you stay on your feet.

✔ Annual checkup

Talk to your primary care provider about your fall risk at your next annual checkup. Let them know if you've had previous falls or if you struggle with balance, standing or walking. They can test your strength, balance and gait with physical tests.

✔ Vision tests

You're more likely to fall if you have trouble seeing people and objects around you. Eyesight tends to get weaker as you get older. So it's important get a vision exam every year.

✔ Blood pressure check

If your blood pressure is too high or too low, you could experience dizziness, weakness or confusion. These symptoms might cause you to lose your balance. Get your blood pressure checked whenever you go to the doctor to make sure it's at a healthy level.

✔ Hearing tests

Hearing loss impacts more than just your ears. It can also raise your risk of falling. That's because your inner ear helps you balance. Plus, when you're struggling to hear what's going on around you, you may bump into others or have an accident. Yearly hearing exams can help spot problems before they get worse.

✔ Medication review

Some drugs may raise your risk of falling. Review your medications with your doctor at your annual checkup. Ask if any of them increase your risk of falling, and what precautions you can take.



Tips to fall-proof your home

Most falls happen in or around the home. These small changes can make your home safer.

- Add grab bars in the bathroom — in your shower and near the toilet.
- Place nonslip decals on the bottom of your shower or bath.
- Secure rugs in place with carpet tape or rubber matting.
- Reroute cords so that they don't run across walkways. If you can't move them, secure them with tape or cord covers.
- Install rails on both sides of stairs.
- Add plug-in nightlights in hallways and keep a lamp near your bed.

Got a medical bill? Most members do not have to pay to get benefits. You should not get a bill for the services you receive unless your benefit package has copays. If you get a bill that you think you should not have gotten, call Member Services at **1-855-232-3596 (TTY: 711)**.

Take advantage of these New Jersey state resources

The Jersey Assistance for Community Caregiving (JACC) Program

People who are at risk of nursing facility placement but meet certain income and resource requirements may be able to remain in their homes, thanks to the JACC program. By providing in-home service packages tailored to individuals, JACC can delay or even prevent placement in a nursing facility.

Call toll-free at **1-877-222-3737** or visit nj.gov/humanservices/doas/services/a-k/jacc.

Stress-Busting Program for Family Caregivers

This nine-week program consists of weekly 90-minute sessions with a small group of caregivers. Participants learn about the disease process, develop stress management techniques, and gain further knowledge and skills. The series is designed to improve the quality of life of family caregivers who provide care for persons with chronic diseases and to help caregivers manage their stress and cope better with their lives.

To find a class in your area, call the Division of Aging Services at **609-438-4797** or visit CaregiverStressBusters.org.

Statewide Respite Care Program

This program provides respite care services for elderly and functionally impaired persons ages 18 and older to relieve their unpaid caregivers of stress arising from the responsibility of providing daily care. A secondary goal of the program is to provide the support necessary to help families avoid placing their loved ones in nursing homes.

To reach the Statewide Respite Care Program in your county, call toll-free at **1-877-222-3737** or visit ADRCNJ.org.

Project Healthy Bones

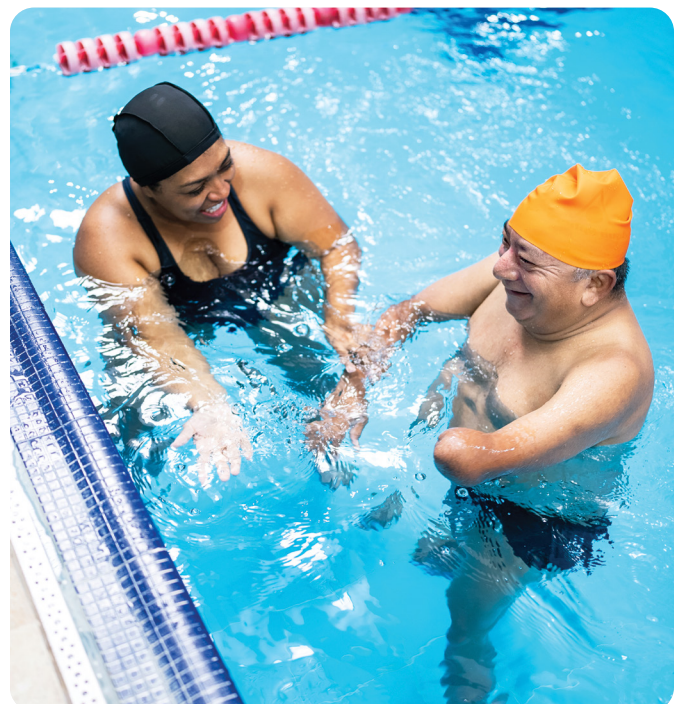
This 24-week exercise and education program for people with, or at risk of, osteoporosis includes exercises that target the body's larger muscle groups to improve strength, balance and flexibility.

Call **609-438-4797** or visit nj.gov/humanservices/doas/services/l-p/healthy-bones.

Move Today

Move Today is a 30- to 45-minute nonaerobic exercise class designed to improve flexibility, balance and stamina. Participants assess their health, physical well-being, and intent to make behavior changes before and upon completion of the program. The exercises and guidelines are based on current nationally recognized standards and science.

Call **609-438-4797** or visit nj.gov/humanservices/doas/services/l-p/move-today.





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 - o Qualified interpreters
 - o Information written in other languages

If you need a qualified interpreter, written information in other formats, translation or other services, call the number on your ID card or **1-800-385-4104**.

If you believe that Aetna has failed to provide these services or discriminated in another way on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex, you can file a grievance with our Civil Rights Coordinator at:

Address: Attn: Civil Rights Coordinator
 P.O. Box 818001
 Cleveland, OH 44181-8001
 Telephone: **1-888-234-7358 (TTY 711)**

Email: MedicaidCRCoordinator@aetna.com

You can file a grievance in person or by mail or email. If you need help filing a grievance, our Civil Rights Coordinator is available to help you.

You can also file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights electronically through the Office for Civil Rights Complaint Portal, available at <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf>, or by mail or phone at: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Avenue, SW Room 509F, HHH Building, Washington, D.C. 20201, 1-800-368-1019, 1-800-537-7697 (TDD).

Complaint forms are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html>.

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Multi-language Interpreter Services

ENGLISH: ATTENTION: If you speak a language other than English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call the number on the back of your ID card or **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

SPANISH: ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al número que aparece en el reverso de su tarjeta de identificación o al **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

CHINESE: 注意: 如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電您的 ID 卡背面的電話號碼或 **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**。

KOREAN: 주의: 한국어를 사용하시는 경우, 언어 지원 서비스를 무료로 이용하실 수 있습니다. 귀하의 ID 카드 뒷면에 있는 번호로나 **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)** 번으로 연락해 주십시오.

PORTUGUESE: ATENÇÃO: Se fala português, encontram-se disponíveis serviços linguísticos, grátis. Ligue para o número que se encontra na parte de trás do seu cartão de identificação ou **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

GUJARATI: ધ્યાન આપો: જો તમે ગુજરાતી બોલતા હો, તો નિ:શુલ્ક ભાષા સહાયતા સેવાઓ તમારા માટે ઉપલબ્ધ છે. તમારા આઈડી કાર્ડની પાછળ આપેલા નંબર પર અથવા **1-800-385-4104** પર કોલ કરો (TTY: 711).

POLISH: UWAGA: Jeśli mówisz po polsku, możesz skorzystać z bezpłatnej pomocy językowej. Zadzwoń pod numer podany na odwrocie Twojego identyfikatora lub pod number **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

ITALIAN: ATTENZIONE: Nel caso la lingua parlata sia l'italiano, sono disponibili servizi di assistenza linguistica gratuita. Chiamare il numero sul retro della tessera oppure il numero **1-800-385-4104 (utenti TTY: 711)**.

ARABIC: ملحوظة: إذا كنت تتحدث باللغة العربية، فإن خدمات المساعدة اللغوية تتوافر لك بالمجان. اتصل على الرقم الموجود خلف بطاقتك الشخصية أو على **1-800-385-4104 (للصم والبكم: 711)**.

TAGALOG: PAUNAWA: Kung nagsasalita ka ng wikang Tagalog, mayroon kang magagamit na mga libreng serbisyo para sa tulong sa wika. Tumawag sa numero na nasa likod ng iyong ID card o sa **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

RUSSIAN: ВНИМАНИЕ: если вы говорите на русском языке, вам могут предоставить бесплатные услуги перевода. Позвоните по номеру, указанному на обратной стороне вашей идентификационной карточки, или по номеру **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

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HINDI: ध्यान दें: यदि आप हिंदी भाषा बोलते हैं तो आपके लिए भाषा सहायता सेवाएं नि:शुल्क उपलब्ध हैं। अपने आईडी कार्ड के पृष्ठ भाग में दिए गए नम्बर अथवा **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)** पर कॉल करें।

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Get screened

Screenings can detect cancer early, when it's easier to treat. Ask your doctor if you're due for any of these key screenings.

- ✔ **Colon cancer.** You should get screened starting at age 45 with a colonoscopy or fecal test. Talk to your doctor about which test is right for you.
- ✔ **Prostate cancer.** If you're over 55, talk to your doctor about whether you should be screened.
- ✔ **Breast cancer.** Women aged 40 to 74 should get a mammogram (breast X-ray) every 2 years. You may need one more often depending on your risk level.
- ✔ **Lung cancer.** If you are over 50 and are a current or former smoker, talk to your doctor about getting screened.



Learn more about your plan with your Member Handbook.

Visit [AetnaBetterHealth.com/newjersey](https://www.aetna.com/newjersey) to view your handbook online.

Or call Member Services at **1-855-232-3596 (TTY: 711)** to have one mailed to you.