

**Family Living  
Focus**

by  
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The Mayo Clinic of Rochester offers the following suggestions to all caregivers, whether dealing with chronic or non chronic illness: Identify the stressors in your caregiving role. What tasks or behaviors are most frustrating or anxiety-producing?

Think through and plan your responses to these stressful situations. Learn and practice stress management techniques. Relaxation exercises such as deep breathing, visualization, as well as physical exercise, can be helpful. Get adequate rest.

Recognize that caregiving is stressful. Don't be hard on yourself when you experience impatience, frustration, sadness, or anger. These are natural emotions when caring for someone who may be unhappy, ungrateful, or difficult.

Be willing to walk away from difficult situations to calm down. Return later and try a new approach.

Set realistic goals regarding what and how much you can do for your loved one.

Take one day at a time. Try not to worry about what might happen when you have planned the best you can.

Be good to yourself. Give yourself frequent praise and rewards for your patience and endurance. Say nice things to yourself when the person you are caring for no longer can.

Use your sense of humor-continue to have fun.

Maintain your own physical, emotional, and spiritual health. Find sources for personal satisfaction. Cultivate some emotional detachment.

In addition to keeping your stress level in line, check with

**Infant Brain Development**

MIDDLETOWN (Dauphin Co.) - Early experiences are important in shaping a child's brain development, and an upcoming satellite videoconference will tell Dauphin County parents and child care providers what they can do to insure the best outcomes.

In "What Brain Research Tells Us About Infant Care," host James Van Horn, professor of rural sociology in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences, will discuss with guests, Karen Lindbergh and Christine Murphy, the different types of care infants need at different ages. They'll also look at making feeding, diapering, and sleeping more than routine chores for infants by fostering quality interactions.

According to Jane Mecum, Penn State Cooperative Extension family living agent in Dauphin County, the program looks to present child care providers with new ways to make caring routines valuable experiences for infants. "We will discuss how appropriate care practices like diapering, feeding and playing change with the age of the infant, she says. "We also want to demonstrate appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication with an infant."

Child care providers and interested parents can see "What Brain Research Tells Us About Infant Care" from 7:00-9:00 on Tuesday, April 18, at the Valleys United Church of Christ, Halifax, or 7:00-9:00 on Monday, May 1, at Penn State Capitol Campus Educational Activities Building, Middletown.

The one-and-a-half hour satellite workshop is part of Better Kid Care,

a nationwide training program reaching an estimated 35,000 childcare providers throughout the United States and Canada. The program, which is delivered in conjunction with Penn State Cooperative Extension family living agents, provides education materials, learning experiences and satellite training workshops for child care providers, parents and employers.

For more information on the program, support materials and other services from "BETTER KID CARE," call Dauphin County Cooperative Extension at 921-8803. The BETTER KID CARE Website can be found at <http://BetterKidCare.psu.edu/newtoc.html>.

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**Caring for the Caregiver**

Being the primary or a supportive caregiver for an elderly person can be very rewarding but it also has its share of challenges. Many recipients of care really appreciate all you do and respond lovingly. You have the feeling that you have done your best for someone you care about.

Take that same caregiver and sprinkle on a little guilt, spread some frustration, slice time in half, and you'll have the unsavory predicament facing the sandwich generation.

Coined for the growing number of Americans who are taking care of their aging parents and their children at the same time, the Sandwich Generation, as well as older caregivers, often finds that taking care of themselves gets shoved to the back burner.

Women in particular find themselves in the role of caregiver, whether by choice, instinct or process of elimination. Of all caregivers, almost 80 percent are women, and more than half of those women are in the workforce. Already juggling the demands of career and family, these women add yet another

layer to the Super Woman Syndrome.

It is not always easy to be the caregiver. We are often so intertwined with the person we are caring for, it's difficult not to bury our own needs in the caregiving process.

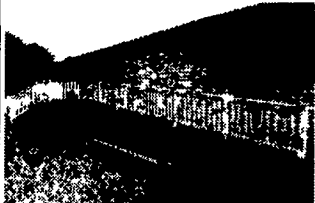
Many of us have been brought up with the idea that it is far more blessed to give than to receive. It is physically exhausting to put another's needs first for years on end. It's mentally fatiguing to be constantly on call to give medications, schedule doctors' appointments, and run a household at the same time.

The loss of "what once was" in a relationship emotionally and physically is painful for both partners. Research studies have shown that family caregivers are at high risks for developing stress related problems. Studies find high rates of depression among caregivers, high levels of anxiety, and increased vulnerability to health problems.

Caregivers often feel powerless, a sense that they have no control over events. Feeling powerless has a significant negative impact on a caregiver's physical and emotional health.

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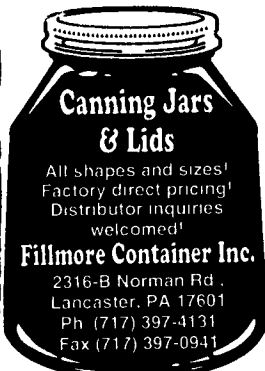


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  - I suffer from chronic fatigue
  - I have poor physical endurance
  - I tend to be moody and irritable
  - I am susceptible to colds and flu
  - I suffer from allergies
  - I frequently feel tense and on edge
  - I am frequently constipated
  - I have frequent pain in my shoulder and/or back
  - I have weight problems
  - I crave sweets, alcohol or soda
- If you checked more than three boxes, your body might not be assimilating sufficient oxygen. Please consult your physician. You may wish to have your blood oxygen levels tested - before and after you begin to use the Chi Machine.

"My research has convinced me that lack of oxygen is the root of most or perhaps even all disease."  
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