

## Take Care of Yourself!

Caregiving is demanding. It is easy to get so involved that you may neglect your own well being. Here are some suggestions that may help:

- You may experience a range of feelings (anger, guilt, obligation) – these are all natural responses. Share your feelings, triumphs and frustrations. Just talking with someone you trust can work wonders.
- Caregiving can be overwhelming. Take time to call a friend, or health care professional. Use alternative caregiving options or services to give yourself a break. (e.g., day programs, respite care)
- Include personal time-off into your daily schedule. **Reward yourself!**
- Look for ways to relax - read, listen to music, eat balanced healthy meals, exercise regularly and try to get enough sleep. These can be difficult to do but will help you to maintain a balance in life.
- Join a caregiver support group to share ideas with others in a similar situation.
- Set realistic goals for yourself. You

have limits, learn to recognize and accept them. Accept help when it is offered.

- Set your own priorities. It's okay to say **no** sometimes.

## Developing a Care Plan

Keeping up friendships and family connections can provide good support. Talk openly with others and develop a care plan that works for everyone.

- Aging and illness can change people. Learning more can help you understand what is happening.
- Caregiving is a two way street. When developing a plan, get help from family, friends and the person who needs care. Provide them with the information that they need (e.g., key contacts, emergency plan, information about illness).
- Get to know the people providing services (e.g., physicians, nurses and pharmacists). Set up a good time and method to discuss health concerns. Remember, you are the expert on the person needing care. Work with others to find creative solutions. Before appointments make a list of questions and write down the answers.

- If you have questions or concerns about a service write down the name of the person to whom you are speaking and ask whom to call.
- Observe and encourage the individual to do daily activities. Foster as much independence as possible.

## Keeping Track

Keep information in an easy to carry notebook/calendar (include photocopies) and record the following:

- Community resources and their phone numbers (including physician and service providers).
- Questions to ask when you see the people providing service.
- Phone numbers of friends and family members.
- Key information on the person receiving care:
  - 1) Ontario health card/additional health coverage card
  - 2) medical history including allergies and immunizations
  - 3) list of current medications and/or medications in original bottles

## Important Documents:

- 1) Release of Information  
(authorization to release private information to a third party)
- 2) Power of Attorney for Property  
(for all financial matters)
- 3) Power of Attorney for Personal Care
- 4) Living Will (advanced directives)
- 5) Legal Will
- 6) Funeral Arrangements  
(pre-planned)

Make sure you know whether the person has a do not resuscitate order (DNR). Check out ESAC's Fast Facts on Legal Issues.

## Emergency Plan

Make a plan for emergencies. Keep a copy with you and give the information to others involved.

- List all contacts (physician, family, pharmacist, friends).
- Use an Emergency Information Vial and wallet size card to record and store up to date information. (See Halton Region's website or speak to your pharmacist) [www.halton.ca](http://www.halton.ca)
- Call 911 for emergencies. They can assess the situation and provide lift assistance.

## When You Aren't There

Consider the following for the person needing care:

- Answering machine
- Phone features such as:
  - loud ring or lights
  - large numbers
  - increased numbers of rings
  - pre-programmed buttons to friends/family
  - highlight one button pre-programmed to the caregiver
  - pictures on buttons
- A simple phone list with large clear writing can be posted by the phone
- A schedule of regular visits/ calls from caregivers, friends or services
- Consider an Emergency Response System (e.g., ConnectCARE, Lifeline.)

For more information or a copy of the Halton Seniors' Directory, contact

### Halton Region

Dial 311 or 905-825-6000

Toll free 1-866-4HALTON (1-866-422-5866)

TTY 905-827-9833

[www.halton.ca](http://www.halton.ca)

# Caregivers Take Care of Yourself



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## Fast Facts

## Elder Services Advisory Committee (ESAC)

