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English (Spanish)

## Ways to stay well while caring

### Eat healthy, nutritious meals

- Try eating fresh fruit or cut up vegetables as a quick and easy snack.
- Use ready-made meals or frozen meals if you don't have time to cook. Look at the ingredients list on the packet and try to choose options that have more vegetables and protein and are not high in fat or sugar.
- Say 'yes' when people offer to drop off a meal for you. They feel good when they can help, and this takes some of the burden off you.
- Avoid having too much caffeine, alcohol or nicotine. Don't use substances to try to manage your feelings – always talk to a health professional if you are struggling to cope.
- Order your groceries online and arrange to have them delivered if you don't have time to go shopping in person.

### Get enough sleep

- Take naps during the day if you are not getting enough sleep at night. Sleep when the person you are caring for sleeps.
- Let friends or family take over caring duties for a night so you can sleep – maybe a video monitor will be helpful.
- Consider using respite services if you are not getting enough sleep.
- Don't make big decisions when you are tired.
- If you are having difficulty sleeping because you are worried or upset, talk to your doctor about this.

### Have health checks

- Make regular visits to your own doctor for health checks, immunisations and to manage your own illnesses and health conditions so you are as well as possible. Keep up regular visits to the dentist.



- Consider asking your doctor to assess your emotional wellbeing or ask if you can have a mental health care plan put in place so you can speak to a mental wellness expert if you need to.
- Talk to someone you trust to help ease your worries, such as your family doctor. People who are caring for someone at the end of their life often feel stressed, anxious or depressed and may feel grief even before the person has passed away. This is very normal, but there may be things that can be done to help you feel better

### Do physical exercise

- Go for a walk or bike ride.
- Attend an exercise class.
- Try some in-home exercises such as yoga, stretching or pilates.

### Maintain social activities and activities you enjoy

- Set up regular times to see your family and friends.
- Do relaxing activities at home. This could include reading, playing card or board games, listening to audio books or podcasts, watching your favourite TV shows or movies, knitting or cooking.
- Staying in touch with family via social media, phone calls or video calls.
- Attend community events and social gatherings.
- Get a massage. You could go to a massage service, or there are some services that will come to your home.

### Share the load

- Ask friends, family or neighbours to sit with the person you are caring for while you go out.
- If it is hard to go out, ask friends or family if they would be willing to cook a meal and come to your home to eat together.
- Talk to your friends and family about how you are, your concerns and what you need.
- When people offer to help, say 'yes'. Make a list of things that people could do to help you so that when someone asks, you have an idea to give them. Suggestions for things they could help with include gardening, cooking, sitting with the person while you go out and doing the shopping.

### Say 'no' and change your expectations

- Say no to things that you can't or don't want to do. Now is not the time to take on extra things.
- Be kind to yourself. You may need to change your expectations of yourself. For example, cleaning the house weekly can be reduced to fortnightly. Don't worry if the front lawn is a bit overgrown.
- It is okay if some household chores are not a priority, as long as the environment is sanitary and safe.

### Put your health and wellbeing first

- Acknowledge to yourself and others that your own health and wellbeing is important.
- Speak to the health care team if you are struggling, need help or are not comfortable with any aspect of the caring role.

- If caring at home is affecting your health and wellbeing, talk to the health care team about other options for where the person can be cared for. If home care doesn't work out, that doesn't mean you have done anything wrong.

**CarerHelp is here when you need it.**

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