



Appreciating Lupus Caregivers

by NEWLIFEOUTLOOK TEAM

Avoiding Lupus Caregiver Burnout

Lupus is an unpredictable illness that can be as much of an emotional rollercoaster for the caregiver as it is for the person with the diagnosis. The physical and emotional impacts of caring for someone with lupus can take their toll; it's important to do all you can to avoid caregiver burnout.

On top of the tips listed below for avoiding burnout, remember that talking to someone about your experience as a caregiver can lift a huge weight off your shoulders. Whether you talk to a therapist, a fellow lupus caregiver, or someone from a support organization, make sure you express your feelings of loss, frustration, resentment, anger or guilt with someone — keeping them bottled up can be damaging to your mental health, and your ability to provide the best care you can.

Also remember to look for the positives. Perhaps caring for your loved one has strengthened the bond the two of you have, or helped you to see what's really important in life. Every cloud has a silver lining.

Read our lupus caregivers infographic below to learn more about caregiving and avoiding burnout.



90 MILLION
Americans are caregivers for loved ones who are sick or disabled in some way.

1 MILLION AMERICANS
are also caring for veterans from the IRAQ+AFGHANISTAN wars who have visible injuries and invisible illnesses.

True Dedication
A caregiver may help their loved one with washing, dressing, eating, or other daily activities, as well as taking medications, getting to doctor's appointments, and so much more.

Handle with CARE
Caregivers often assist with tasks of daily living. The most common chronic conditions that require a person to have care include:

- Multiple sclerosis
- Cancer
- Stroke
- Diabetes
- Dementia
- Parkinson's
- Alzheimer's
- Depression
- Autism

For young and YOUNG AT HEART
Because of America's aging population, the number of people needing care has been rising, and is expected to keep going up. By 2020, people age 65 and older are expected to make up around 35% of the American population, up from 25% in 2000.
 However, parents caring for children with disabilities are also in the family caregiver ranks. Children with conditions like autism, muscular dystrophy, and down's syndrome all require a caregiver, often through into adulthood.

CAREGIVER BURNOUT
Caregiver burnout is when a caregiver becomes emotionally and physically exhausted under the strain of caring for another person. This can manifest as:

- Irritability and feeling blue
- Fatigue and changes in sleep patterns
- Withdrawing from friends and other loved ones
- Abandoning activities you used to enjoy
- Changes in appetite and/or weight
- Depression and/or anxiety

Six tips to **AVOID BURNOUT**SM

- Stay HEALTHY**
It's easy to spend so much time thinking about your loved one's health that you completely forget about your own. Make sure you take care of yourself: eat well, exercise and get enough sleep.
- Pursue your INTERESTS**
Sticking up on your hobbies and interests because of your caregiving duties can take a toll on your mental health and overall well-being. Make time to do things you enjoy.
- Take time to DE-STRESS**
Consider taking up a stress-reducing activity like yoga, meditation or deep breathing techniques that will help you let go of the stress of being a caregiver.
- Take A BREAK**
Being a caregiver, although a labor of love, can be emotionally and physically draining. Get time to rest, being a caregiver every day and then to rest and recharge.
- Connect with other CAREGIVERS**
Joining a support group or an online forum for caregivers can help you to feel less alone in your struggles and provide a sense of community.
- Seek and ACCEPT HELP**
There is no shame in admitting you need help, asking for help, or accepting it when it's offered. Caregivers who ask for help are better able to cope.

