



Nutrition & Physical Activity



Caregiver fatigue is a feeling of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion. Frequently, caregivers are so focused on caring for others, that they neglect their own needs. However, delegating some time to focus on some of your needs, can benefit both you and those you care for.

Signs of Caregiver Fatigue

Caregiving can be rewarding, but can also be very stressful. If you are experiencing any of the following, you may be suffering from caregiver fatigue.

- Feeling tired shortly after waking.
- Gaining or losing weight.
- Feeling sad.
- Experiencing feelings of helplessness.
- Feeling distracted.
- Having headaches and body pains or achiness.
- Having trouble sleeping.

Combatting Caregiver Fatigue

Set personal health goals that focus on physical and emotional health. *This might include scheduling routine times for physical activities, improving your nutritional intake drinking plenty of water, and setting aside time to do something that you enjoy.*

Improving Your Nutritional Status

Nutrition is defined as the ability of the body to use food for energy, maintain proper body functions, and growth. A good nutritional status means we are getting the right amount of vitamins, fats, proteins, carbs, and minerals needed to carry out these processes (Peckenpaugh, 2010).

App of the Month



MyFitnessPal is a powerhouse app, with an enormous food database, barcode scanner, recipe importer, restaurant logger, food insights, calorie counter, and so much more! Whether you are monitoring your nutrition to lose weight, change bad habits, build muscle, or just holding yourself accountable for what you are eating. *App of the Month is not endorsed by DBHDS OIH. User accepts full responsibility for use.*

Set Realistic Nutrition & Activity Goals

January is a great time to evaluate nutrition and physical activity goals. Most people adopt New Year's Resolutions aimed at improving their diet and general health, but fail to follow through with their plans for the remainder of the year. Unrealistic goals are often hard to maintain. Instead, try focusing on making small, positive changes. A successful improvement plan should include making healthier food choices, improving eating patterns and scheduling times for routine physical activity. Setting realistic goals for nutrition and physical activity is important for success, and being successful improves self-esteem (Mayo Clinic, 2018).

Why is Nutrition so Important?

The Dietary Guidelines provides an evidence based outline to promote healthy eating patterns, encourage maintaining a healthy weight, and eating nutritious food to prevent disease.

- 1. Follow a healthy eating pattern across the lifespan.** *The food and beverage we choose daily has a cumulative effect and directly affects health outcomes.*
- 2. Focus on variety, nutrient density, and amount.** *Strive to meet nutrient needs within calorie limits, choose a variety of high nutrient foods within each of the food groups.*
- 3. Limit calories from added sugars and saturated fats and reduce sodium intake.** *Decrease foods and beverages higher in fats, sugar and sodium.*
- 4. Shift to healthier food and beverage choices.** *Consider cultural impact on diet and food availability. Considering personal preferences is important to making these choices easier to accomplish.*
- 5. Support healthy eating patterns for all.** *We all have a role in helping to create and support healthy eating patterns, which includes incorporating them into multiple settings (work, school, home, community) (Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2015).*

New Year's Food Tips

1. Replace sugary desserts (such as pie or cake) with fresh fruit with a dollop of non-fat cool whip. Non-fat gelatin with a dollop of non-fat cool whip is a refreshing dessert as well.
2. Instead of sugary sodas, choose water.
3. When baking, substitute pureed fruits such as applesauce, in place of butter or oils.
4. Use spices instead of sodium.
5. Fill half of your plate with vegetables and fruits.
6. Use skim milk or non-fat milk instead of whole milk on cereal and in recipes.
7. Choose whole wheat bread instead of white bread.
8. Use gravies sparingly. Gravies are very high in calories and fats.

Why is Physical Activity so Important?

Regular physical activity has many health benefits. It promotes independence and helps improve mood, especially if someone is participating in activities that they love. Regular physical activity can lower high blood pressure, lower blood sugar, improve balance and stamina, and can help build muscle and bone. Regular physical activity can also help reduce the risk of diabetes, heart disease, breast cancer and colon cancer. Physical exercise can also lessen depressive thoughts and can lower stress levels. (National Institute of Aging, 2015).



References

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The 4 Categories of Physical Exercise

Endurance exercises increase your breathing and heart rate. These types of exercises improve heart, lung and circulatory systems. *Examples: Brisk walking, dancing, swimming, playing basketball.*

Strength training exercises (even in small amounts) can increase overall muscle strength. Routine strength training can make a great difference in your ability to carry out day-to-day task. *Examples: Lifting weights, using resistance bands.*

Balance exercises helps to prevent falls by improving on lower-body strength. *Examples: Standing on one foot, heel-to-toe walking.*

Flexibility exercises stretch muscles so you can be more flexible, which gives you freedom to move. *Examples: Yoga, calf stretches* (National Institute of Aging, 2015).

NOTE: See the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020 to find recommendations on how much time should be spent daily (on physical activity), categorized by age group.

Helpful Resources

- National Institute on Aging: Exercise & Physical Activity - <https://order.nia.nih.gov/sites/default/files/2018-04/nia-exercise-guide.pdf>
- Choose My Plate - <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>
- Dietary Guidelines For Americans 2015-2020, eighth edition (ISBN 978-0-16-093251-9) - <https://health.gov/>
- Eat Healthy-Be Active Community Workshop Series (ISBN 978-0-16-091375-4) - <https://healthfinder.gov/>

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