Caregiver Support

A characteristic shared by almost all family caregivers is occasional loneliness. Even if you have help coming in to your home and lots of doctors to visit, the day-to-day tasks of caregiving can create a sense of being the only one experiencing the challenges (and sometimes the joys) of caregiving. For caregivers who are needed 24/7, this loneliness can be especially acute.

Some caregivers are fortunate to have family members or friends to provide some respite, even if it’s only an occasional sympathetic ear. For some, that support can be all they need to boost spirits and get back to caregiving with renewed energy. Research shows that caregivers who find support for their emotional needs, outside their usual caregiver role, are more resilient and effective within their caregiver role.

For other caregivers, however, there are no friends or family nearby who understand and can provide caregiver support. What options do these caregivers have for recharging their spirits?

Increasingly, specialized support groups are available to caregivers. These groups exist in the traditional format of a group that meets face-to-face once a week or so, but also as online groups whose members know each other only as discussion participants on a computer. Both of these types provide valuable support to caregivers by:

- Sharing effective coping strategies
- Sharing solutions to common challenges
- Finding understanding from others with similar experience
emotional highs and lows. The opportunity to share highs can multiply the joy, and sharing the lows can minimize the burden. Support groups can bolster a caregiver’s resilience by providing that opportunity.

Adapted from caregiver.com

Your Resources

Acquiring Saving Habits

When it comes to money, do you often feel like you are your own worst enemy? Do you spend more than you earn? Are your spending habits keeping you from reaching important goals?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, think about swapping your old spending habits for new saving habits. Saving is not about giving up things you want. Instead, saving money is a way to keep your wants from getting in the way of your needs.

Here is a list of seven important saving habits:

1) Saving for emergencies and unexpected expenses. Financial planning experts recommend keeping three to six months of living expenses in some type of savings account. The
extra cushion makes it easier to avoid pulling out the credit card when the hot water tank bursts, and provides additional security should you lose your job.

2) Setting financial goals and saving money to achieve them. Paying for retirement, the education of a child, a new car or even a family vacation requires planning. The more time you have to reach your goal, the more you benefit from saving.

3) Paying down and eliminating debt. Debt reduces your financial flexibility. The money devoted to credit card payments and small loans could be going toward your emergency savings fund or a future financial goal.

4) Spending less for routine expenses. Most households can increase the money available for family expenses by simply paying more attention to where the money goes. Tracking your spending for a few weeks often reveals spending problems you otherwise would not notice.

5) Comparison shopping. It is not practical to compare prices for different brands and from different stores for every purchase. The more expensive the item, the greater the potential pay-off from shopping around. The Internet makes it easier than ever before to find the best price.

6) Investing for long-term goals. Investing is a special kind of saving for things you need or want more than ten years from now. Interest on savings accounts barely keeps pace with inflation. Investment options offer the opportunity for greater returns, but typically involve more risk.

7) Teaching your children saving habits. What messages are you giving your children about money? Spending takes no talent, gifts or special abilities--anyone can do it. Developing saving habits takes practice. Helping your children to develop saving habits is the gift that keeps on giving.

Your Health

Are You At Risk for B₁₂ Deficiency?

Vitamin B₁₂ is an important B vitamin that we need for the health of our nervous system and production of cells, especially red blood cells. Our bodies cannot make B₁₂, so we must consume it from animal foods like meat, poultry, eggs, shellfish, dairy foods and fortified cereals.

Normally the acids in our stomach remove the B₁₂ from our food. It then
mild symptoms or no symptoms at all until B₁₂ levels are very low. Common symptoms are:

- Anemia
- Weakness, dizziness especially upon standing, feeling tired
- Paleness
- Sore red tongue or bleeding gums
- Loss of appetite
- Numbness or tingling of the hands and feet
- Nausea
- Weight loss
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Poor concentration
- Shortness of breath with exercise

Diagnosis is not easy. Your doctor will do some blood tests. If these are unclear, more tests to examine the health of your stomach, intestine or bone marrow may be needed.

At one time, the only treatment was monthly B₁₂ injections, but now research shows that taking 1-2 milligrams of B₁₂ in a pill works just as well. This is good news for older adults who don’t like taking shots or who have trouble getting to the doctor’s office.

It is important that B₁₂ deficiency be diagnosed as soon as symptoms occur since it can result in permanent nerve damage if left untreated. It can also cause depression and mental confusion. Unfortunately, people may have very

There are many reasons why we may not get enough B₁₂. Some common reasons are:

- Poor appetite which keeps us from consuming enough B₁₂ from food
- Removal of part of the stomach or small intestine during surgery like some weight loss surgeries
- Digestive diseases like Crohn’s disease, celiac disease, intestinal parasites or overgrowth of bacteria
- Taking antacids or other heartburn medicines for a long time
- Taking the diabetes medicine, metformin, for over 4 years
- Being a vegan who does not eat any animal foods
- Alcohol abuse
- Pernicious anemia where the stomach cells that make intrinsic factor are destroyed by the body’s immune system

combines with a special substance made by our stomach cells called intrinsic factor. If this does not happen, B₁₂ cannot be absorbed.
Greek Halibut

Adapted from Wild Alaska Seafood *Cook It Frozen!*
http://www.cookitfrozen.com

Serves 2

2 frozen 4-ounce halibut steaks or some other mild white fish
Non-stick cooking spray
½ teaspoon lemon pepper or spicy Mrs. Dash
8 grape tomatoes, sliced in half
¼ cup chopped sweet onion
½ cup chopped green, red or yellow bell pepper
2 teaspoons lemon juice
½ teaspoon dry oregano or basil
1 tablespoon white wine
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 tablespoons crumbled reduced-fat feta cheese

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees.

2. Take two 12x18-inch sheets of aluminum foil. Place dull sides up and spray with cooking spray.

3. Put one steak in the center of each sheet and sprinkle with Mrs. Dash.

4. In small bowl, combine remaining ingredients. Spoon evenly over fish.

5. Bring up foil sides over fish and double fold top and ends. Seal well but leave some room for air circulation in the packets. Place packets in baking dish. Leave plenty of room around each packet.

6. Bake for 22 minutes or until fish flakes easily and is opaque throughout.

**Nutritional Analysis:**

Calories: 230
Carbohydrate: 4.5 grams
Protein: 26 grams
Total Fat: 10.5 grams
Saturated Fat: 2 grams
Cholesterol: 38 grams
Sodium: 182 milligrams
Fiber: 1 gram
Dear Friend,

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