

November Is National Family Caregivers Month: 5 Steps to Reduce the Stress of Caregiving

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O'FALLON – HSHS St. Elizabeth's Hospital recognizes caregivers everywhere during National Family Caregivers Month. According to the [National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP](#), 84% of caregivers need more help and information with at least 14 specific topics related to caregiving. The top three topics of concern to caregivers are:

- Keeping their loved ones safe
- Managing their own stress
- Making end-of-life decisions

Many caregivers face their own health problems and are under severe emotional stress and physical strain.

With the number of people needing care steadily growing, here are five ways to reduce the stress of caregiving:

1. **Learn about the family member's diagnosis.** Knowledge about the medical condition helps caregivers understand the disease and plan ahead realistically.
2. **Discuss finances and health care wishes.** Although these conversations can be difficult, they help to better prepare for the future and relieve anxiety.
3. **Invite family and close friends to discuss the care needed with and for their loved one.** This meeting gives caregivers a change to say what they need, plan for care and ask others for help.
4. **Take advantage of community resources.** Meals on Wheels, adult day programs and respite programs can help relieve the workload and offer needed breaks. Look for caregiver educational programs that will increase skills and knowledge while offering support.
5. **Find support.** This may be the most important thing a caregiver can do as they take on more responsibility. Support groups can be helpful in connecting with others who are experiencing the same circumstances.

Caregiving can be overwhelming at times. For more information, please call Family Caregiver Alliance at (800) 445-8106 or visit caregiver.org to register for free resources and assistance.

About Hospital Sisters Health System

Hospital Sisters Health System's (HSHS) mission is to reveal and embody Christ's healing love for all people through our high-quality, Franciscan health care ministry. HSHS provides state-of-the-art health care to our patients and is dedicated to serving all people, especially the most vulnerable, at each of our physician practices and 15 local hospitals in two states - Illinois (Breese, Decatur, Effingham, Greenville, Highland, Litchfield, O'Fallon, Shelbyville and Springfield) and Wisconsin (Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, Oconto Falls, Sheboygan, and two in Green Bay). HSHS is sponsored by Hospital Sisters Ministries, and Hospital Sisters of St. Francis is the founding institute. For more information about HSHS, visit www.hshs.org. For more information about Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, visit www.hospitalsisters.org.