

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. It is an annual campaign to increase the awareness of the disease. For the entire month, [Level Up](#) will be providing you with valuable information focused on education and support.

Taking Care of You

Caring for someone with cancer can sometimes feel overwhelming. It's not easy handling medicines, doctor appointments, meals and everyday tasks. There's also the emotional support you provide, helping your loved one deal with a range of feelings and difficult decisions.

With such a big focus on your loved one, you may be putting aside your own needs. This can take a toll on your emotional and physical health. Remember, you need to be strong, too. All caregivers need help and support. It may be hard for you to focus on yourself, but it's important for your well-being. Here are some tips to help you through this challenging time:

- **Ask for help.** You may feel that you need to do it all, but you can't do everything. Take a look at what you'd be willing to have someone else handle. Moving even a few responsibilities to someone else can make a big difference.
- **Find a way to relax.** Take 15 – 30 minutes each day to do something that you enjoy, such as nap, reading, a hobby or exercise.
- **Learn more about cancer.** The unknown can be scary. The more you know about your loved one's condition, the more confident you'll be in your caregiving role.
- **Connect with your loved one in need.** You're going through a very difficult time together. Although it can feel overwhelming, it can be a time of bonding. Appreciate the special moments with one another.
- **Find the positive and be thankful.** It may not always be easy, but the positive moments and feelings of gratitude for the simplest things can help you get through the day. Know that it's okay to feel joy and to laugh. Laughter is a great way to relieve stress.
- **Pay attention to yourself.** It's important to pay attention to what you're experiencing and feeling. You may have a range of emotions such as anger, anxiety, depression, fear, loneliness or guilt. Find a way to process your feelings whether it's talking with a friend, spending time on your own or a balance of both. Other things that may help:
 - *Join a support group.* Talking with others who are dealing with similar issues can be helpful. You'll see that you're not alone and can hear how other people cope. You can share your experiences or just listen to others.
 - *Use a journal.* Writing can help you process your thoughts and feelings. You may be surprised at how it may help calm your mind.
 - *Talk with a professional.* Sometimes you may want to open up to someone outside your friends and family. It may be helpful to talk with a counselor, social worker or someone in your faith community. You may feel more likely to discuss things that you don't want to share with friends and family.
- **Pay attention to your body.** Staying healthy will allow you to continue giving care and support to your loved one. Pay attention to your own health with these tips.
 - Keep up with your own doctor appointments and medications.

- Watch for signs of depression or anxiety.
- Try to eat healthy.
- Get enough sleep.
- Try to exercise for 30 minutes a day, even if it's just ten minutes at a time.

Resources & Information

- [American Cancer Society](#)
- [National Breast Cancer Coalition](#)
- [National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship](#)
- [Stand Up to Cancer](#)
- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Office of Women's Health](#)

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