

Some Good Ideas for Caregivers

- Learn all you can about the illness and treatment.
- If you do not live with the patient, plan your visits so that you will be more efficient.
- Know what community resources are available.
- Learn about housing options and out of the home placement before the need presents itself.
- Pull together a list of prescription medicines and over the counter medicine. Know the dosage and schedules.
- Go through the house and look for possible hazards (loose rugs, poor lighting, lack of bathroom grab bars, low toilet seats).
- Make sure that the bathroom door can be unlocked from the outside.
- Get large print and talking books from the library and read together.
- Discuss advance directives with your loved one. It is important to know what kind of end of life care they want to receive. This will relieve you of the burden of making choices for someone else.
- Before the appointment ask the patient, the sitter and other siblings if they have questions for the doctor.
- Make a list of questions and take them with you to the doctor's appointment. Take notes of what was said during the visit.
- Do not answer questions for the patient unless you have been asked to.
- Practice good communication skills—listen carefully then think before you speak.
- Be aware of your limitations. Maintain a healthy balance between caregiving and your personal needs.