



What Are the Caregiver's Rights?

Caring for someone you love after a heart or stroke event can be hard. The responsibilities and the emotional stress of being a caregiver can cause you to forget to take care of yourself.

These rights will help you reaffirm that you have a right to health and happiness, even when you're caring for someone else. They'll help you realize that the emotions and pressures you may be feeling are normal.



I have the right to:

- Take care of myself by eating well, exercising and getting plenty of rest. It will enable me to be healthy enough to care of my loved one.
- Ask for and accept help from others. I know the limits of my own endurance and strength.
- Seek out and use caregiving resources in my community so I can take time for myself.
- Maintain aspects of my life that don't include the person I'm caring for. I know I do everything I can for this person, and I have the right to do some things for myself.
- Get angry, be depressed and express other difficult emotions at times.
- Reject any attempt to manipulate me through guilt, anger or depression.
- Receive consideration, affection, forgiveness and acceptance from my loved one for as long as I offer these qualities in return.
- Take pride in what I'm doing and applaud the courage it takes to meet the needs of my loved one.

- Protect my right to make a life for myself. This will sustain me when my loved one no longer needs my full-time help.

How do I assert my rights?

Put these caregiver rights where you and the person you care for can see them. Add other rights that are specific to you.

Sharing this list with the person you care for will help clear the air, give you the courage to stand up for yourself and allow you to ask for these rights without feeling guilty.

Where can I find support?

Help may come from your family, friends, neighbors and place of worship. This "informal" support network can help with specific tasks and provide emotional support.



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You can also find support through government and nonprofit agencies and community resources. These are two you could contact for assistance:

Family Caregiver Alliance
800-445-8106 • caregiving.org

The mission of Family Caregiver Alliance is to improve the quality of life for family caregivers and the people who receive their care. FCA can provide information, education and support for family caregivers, including the Family Care Navigator, a state-by-state list of services and assistance.

Caregiver Action Network
855-227-3640 • caregiveraction.org

The Caregiver Action Network (CAN) is the nation's leading family caregiver organization working to improve the quality of life for Americans who care for loved ones with chronic conditions, disabilities, disease or the frailties of old age. CAN provides education, peer support and resources to family caregivers across the country for free.



Sharing your feelings with friends or joining a support group can help ease the pressure you feel as a caregiver.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

- 1 Call 1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721), or visit heart.org to learn more about heart disease and stroke.
- 2 Sign up for our monthly *Heart Insight* e-news for heart patients and their families at HeartInsight.org.
- 3 Connect with others sharing similar journeys with heart disease and stroke by joining our Support Network at heart.org/SupportNetwork.

Do you have questions for your doctor or nurse?

Take a few minutes to write down your questions for the next time you see your health care professional.

For example:

Where can I find someone to sit with my loved one a few hours a day?

MY QUESTIONS:

We have many other fact sheets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk for heart disease, manage your condition or care for a loved one. Visit heart.org/AnswersByHeart to learn more.