

# Your Health Matters

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## How to Recognize and Prevent Caregiver Burnout

There are currently some 40 million Americans acting as a caregiver to a family member, friend, or neighbor. Their responsibilities range from medication management to meal preparation to basic grooming - one-third of caregivers provide as many as 21 hours of care per week. While caregiving is a selfless and profoundly fulfilling act, it can also create high stress and financial strain. On average, caregivers are more likely to experience depression, anxiety and chronic illness. These conditions can eventually lead to burnout.

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CHARLES B. WANG  
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER  
王嘉廉社區醫療中心



[www.cbwchc.org](http://www.cbwchc.org)

A non-profit community health center established in 1971 to ensure that everyone has access to quality and affordable health care.

## What to Look For

Caregiver burnout is a serious issue and can result in extreme physical and emotional exhaustion. Here are some signs to look out for when you are feeling overwhelmed:

1. Poor concentration and forgetfulness
2. Easily agitated
3. Feeling sadness and guilt
4. Lack of socialization
5. Poor sleep
6. A decrease in appetite and digestive problems
7. Headaches and muscle pain

If you are dealing with these symptoms, the first thing to do is speak with a provider and rule out any other illness. That way, you can focus on what is causing your stress and do something about it.

## What You Can Do

Self-care is not selfish. One of the most important things to remember is that a healthy caregiver is also a better caregiver. By treating yourself well, you become reenergized and are in a better position to care for your loved one. Consider the following tips:

1. Simplify your daily routine and cut out any unnecessary activities.
2. Reach out to family and friends to share caregiver responsibilities.
3. Take a short break. Arrange for a sitter so you can get some self-care – it can be anything from taking a trip to getting a haircut.
4. Craft 15-minute “me-time” every day and do something you enjoy.
5. Make time to see your friends.
6. Exercise regularly. Activities such as jogging, swimming and Tai Chi can help you relieve stress and improve your sleep.

**If you ever find yourself out of options, please don't hesitate to reach out to a doctor or a social worker at Charles B. Wang Community Health Center.**

**You can also contact 1-888-NYC-WELL (1-888-692-9355), a 24/7 support line for New Yorkers.**

## HEALTHY RECIPE Japanese-Style Beef and Noodle Soup



Prep Time: 25 minutes  
Cook Time: 15 minutes  
Yields: 4 servings  
Serving Size: 1 Cup

### Nutrition Facts - Amount Per Serving

Calories 325  
Total Fat 8g  
Saturated Fat 3g  
Cholesterol 52mg  
Sodium 285mg  
Total Fiber 4g  
Protein 36g  
Carbohydrates 28g  
Potassium 882mg

### Ingredients for Broth

- 4 oz shiitake mushroom stems, rinsed (remove caps and set aside or substitute dried shiitake mushrooms)
- 1 tbsp garlic, minced (about 2–3 cloves)
- 1 tbsp ginger, minced
- 1 stalk lemongrass, crushed (or the zest from 1 lemon: use a peeler to grate a thin layer of skin off a lemon)
- 1 tbsp ground coriander
- 4 cups low-sodium beef broth
- 1 tbsp lite soy sauce

### Ingredients for Meat and Vegetables

- 1 bag (12 oz) frozen vegetable stir-fry
- 4 oz shiitake mushrooms caps, rinsed and quartered
- 8 oz udon or soba noodles (or substitute angel hair pasta), cooked
- 1 lb lean beef top sirloin, sliced very thin
- 4 oz firm silken tofu, diced
- ¼ cup scallions (green onions), rinsed and sliced thin

### Directions

1. Thaw frozen vegetables in the microwave (or place entire bag in a bowl of hot water for about 10 minutes). Set aside until step 4.
2. Combine all ingredients for broth, except soy sauce, in a medium-sized pot or saucepan. Bring to a boil over high heat, then lower heat and simmer for 15 minutes.
3. Strain the broth through a fine wire colander, and discard the solid parts. Season to taste with soy sauce.
4. To finish the soup, bring the broth back to a boil. Add the thawed vegetable stir-fry mix and mushroom caps, and simmer for 1 minute.
5. Add the noodles and continue to simmer for another minute.
6. Add the beef and continue to simmer for about 5 minutes or until the beef is slightly pink to brown (to a minimum internal temperature of 145 °F).
7. Add tofu and scallions, and simmer 1–2 minutes until heated through.
8. Serve immediately in 1-cup portions.

# Caring For Seniors

Many people are often thrown into the role of caregiver, usually following a medical crisis. Knowing the right thing to do can sometimes be difficult – especially when caring for a senior who was once the primary decision maker in the family. To better understand how you can keep your loved one healthy while also maintaining their independence, focus on the following three areas:



## PHYSICAL HEALTH

A large part of healthy aging is due to physical health. Regular exercise can boost a senior's strength and mobility. When people stop moving, muscles get weaker and balance becomes poor.

Simply taking a stroll in the neighborhood, or getting off a subway stop early and walking the rest of the way, counts as a healthy activity. Joining a gym or taking a dance class is another fun way for seniors to stay fit and meet new friends. It is also important to remember to keep a healthy diet. When caring for a loved one, avoid overfeeding and prepare more frequent meals and snacks instead of large, heavy meals.

## MENTAL HEALTH

About 15% of adults over the age of 60 deal with a mental disorder. Seniors usually face more stressors, compared to the general population, due to limited physical mobility, chronic pain, the death of loved ones and declining savings.

Asian Americans are less likely to seek out mental health services. Some feel that it would bring shame to their families, while others are afraid of becoming a burden. Having social interactions can often help with a person's mood and emotional health. It is also essential to monitor your loved one's appetite and sleep patterns for any changes. Additionally, any changes in personality can also be a sign of a mental health issue.

## SOCIAL WELL-BEING

Older adults often feel isolated, especially during the day when their caregivers are at work or running errands. With limited opportunity to socialize, they miss out on interpersonal interactions that can impact their physical and emotional health.

You can help your loved one improve their social life by scheduling visits with family and friends, making phone calls or writing letters and e-mails. They can also join a local senior center, volunteer in the community, or take a cooking or language class.

# Paid Family Leave



## Did you know that New York State has the strongest paid family leave policy in the country?

New Yorkers who work for a private employer are eligible for job-protected, paid family leave. That means if you need to take time off to provide care for a relative with a serious health issue, or bond with your newborn, you will continue to receive a weekly wage, health insurance coverage and be guaranteed the same or a comparable job after your leave ends.

For more information, please visit:  
[www.ny.gov/programs/new-york-state-paid-family-leave](http://www.ny.gov/programs/new-york-state-paid-family-leave).

# Quick and Easy Cooking Tips for Caregivers



Cooking at home has many excellent benefits – it's typically healthier than eating out, provides a well-balanced diet, gives you an opportunity to bond with your loved ones and saves money. For caregivers whose time is already a limited resource, mealtime can also be stressful and even overwhelming. Below are some cooking tips to help make meal prep less of a chore.

## Review Dietary Restrictions

Speak to your loved one's physician or dietitian about what foods to avoid and portion control before deciding on what to cook. Sometimes, it is simpler to substitute an ingredients rather than trying a new recipe.

## Stock Up on Dry Goods

Save time and money by stocking up on essential ingredients. Oatmeal, rice, beans, grains, and pasta are hearty staples that are nutritious and filling - you can also easily purchase them in bulk.

## Repeat Recipes

It's okay to repeat when planning your meals. If your loved one has a favorite recipe that is delicious and well-balanced in nutrients, feel free to work the dish into the rotation more often. If they have a favorite ingredient, you can also create meals around that specific food.

## Try One-Pot Meals

Save on messes and time with a one-pot meal. Not everyone has time to prepare separate dishes every night. Luckily, many delicious recipes combine protein, vegetables, and starches in one hearty bowl. Stir-fries, noodles, pot roasts, and stews are just some examples of what can be possible. Remember, you can get a head start on all your meals by marinating meats and chopping up vegetables ahead of time.

## Plan To Cook Only a Few Nights a Week

Not every meal needs to be made from scratch. Decide on a few meal ideas that can be reused as leftovers. You can also cook in large batches and freeze them for days when you are too busy to cook.

## Apply For SNAP

Cooking fresh meals every day can put a strain on financial resources. Consider applying for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), which helps low-income working people, senior citizens and people with disabilities purchase fresh produces, meats and fish.

## STAY HEALTHY. GET A CHECKUP. MAKE AN APPOINTMENT!

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Join us! Your generosity can help us provide quality health services to our community. To support us, send a check to Charles B. Wang Community Health Center, 268 Canal Street, New York, NY 10013 or visit [www.cbwchc.org](http://www.cbwchc.org). Donations are deductible to the extent allowed by law.