



Brought to you by the Holy Family Health Ministry

November is National Family Caregivers Month



The importance and challenges of family caregiving cannot be overstated. Managing medication, getting to doctor appointments, making sure everything is ok—all while balancing work and home.

**If you are a family caregiver, the following tips can help you rise to the demands and challenges of your role.**

- Take care of your own health so that you can be strong enough to take care of your loved one.
- Accept offers of help and suggest specific things people can do to help you.
- Learn how to communicate effectively with doctors.
  - Do not be afraid to ask questions about your loved ones' treatment.
  - If the doctor does not respond to your questions, consider seeking another provider for your loved one.
- Caregiving is hard work so take rest breaks often.
  - Make a point to do things that relieve your stress
  - Prayer and meditation is recommended, but you know best what helps you to relax – music, reading, gardening, going to the beach, etc.
- Watch out for signs of depression and do not delay getting professional help when you need it.





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- Be open to new technologies and safety measures that can help you care for your loved one.
  - If your loved one tends to wander, use door locks that require keys to open.
  - Place safety grab bars in bathrooms.
  - Remove scatter rugs to prevent trips and falls.
- Organize medical information so it is up to date and easy to find.
  - Carry information on all medication, prescribed and over the counter, to doctor visits.
  - Inform the doctor of any local herbs being taken (some herbs can interfere with prescribed medications).
- Make sure legal documents are in order.
  - These include:
    1. Power of attorney to manage your loved one's affairs;
    2. Advance directive for health care
- Give yourself credit for doing the best you can in one of the toughest jobs there is!
- **Take naps. One of the healthiest things you can do for yourself is to fit naps into your weekly schedule. Round-the-clock caregiving is never easy. But when your loved one takes a break, don't do another task — you take a break too. It's important not to wear yourself down or who will take care of you.**
- **Seek support from other caregivers. You are not alone!**

**The Virgin Islands Department of Human Services provides support groups for family caregivers. If you care for a loved one and would benefit from interacting with persons dealing with similar issues, call 340-774-0930 and ask for the Caregivers Program.**

***"Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up". Galatians 6: 9***

