

Share the Load: Meaningful Ways You Can Offer to Help

Here are some ways concerned friends and family can offer to share the load by helping. Ask if you can:

- ✧ Sit with the patient for a day, giving the caregiver a little time off or time to work.
- ✧ Go grocery shopping and put up groceries.
- ✧ Cook food that can be frozen—soups, casseroles, cookies, bread, pies or cakes.
- ✧ Send upbeat cards or notes and call or e-mail just to stay in touch.
- ✧ Arrange for a manicure, pedicure, massage or lunch out.
- ✧ Give theater tickets or a gift card.
- ✧ Give gift certificates to the restaurant (even if it is fast food) nearest the hospital.
- ✧ Help with the yard or hire a lawn service.
- ✧ Take mail to the post office.
- ✧ Help with laundry while visiting with the family.
- ✧ Take the patient to a doctor's appointment or to chemotherapy.
- ✧ Fill up the car with gasoline and have it washed.
- ✧ Give cards for sending thank-you notes.
- ✧ Take the caregiver and patient for a drive to see spring blooms, autumn foliage or a nice park.
- ✧ Send a roll of stamps.
- ✧ Offer to call other friends and family members to give them updates.
- ✧ Create a blog or website updating the events regarding the patient and helping to eliminate the need to take or make phone calls at night.
- ✧ Buy appropriate videos to entertain both patient and caregiver.
- ✧ Buy a journal and send it to the caregiver.
- ✧ Pick up a fruit basket or fresh fruits in season. Fresh flowers are nice, too.
- ✧ Buy a certificate that can be used at their pharmacy.
- ✧ Give a department store or super store gift card that can be used for clothing because patient maybe losing weight and may need new clothing.
- ✧ Help the caregiver keep a sense of humor. Don't think all your conversation has to focus on the situation.
- ✧ Give crossword puzzles, magazines and/or novels to read.
- ✧ Give games two can play, such as dominoes or Chinese checkers.
- ✧ Send a bag of hard candy.
- ✧ Don't hesitate to call and talk for just a minute to let both patient and caregiver know you're thinking about them.
- ✧ Short visits are always welcomed; don't assume the family wants to be alone. Come and share happy thoughts.
- ✧ Create little love boxes for the patient. Include happy sayings or inspiring notes for encouragement and items the patient can use, like packets of tissues.
- ✧ If there are children, offer to help with carpools, sports, lessons or medical and dental appointments. Or give kids a break for a movie or sleep-over.