



Time sure is flying so we must be having fun! Can you believe the end of the year is fast approaching already? As we begin to wind down 2016 let's all take a moment to remember the many incredible blessings (large and small) that have painted the landscapes of our lives this year. With all the hustle and bustle, we sometimes overlook just how fortunate we are and how very much we have to be thankful for—family, friends, a sound mind and body and our wellbeing. However you commemorate the season, my wish for each of you is that each day you take time to realize just how amazing this life is... and just how amazing **you** are. All the best to you and yours!

Lynise Anderson, N.D., C.N.C.

11 Tips for a More Healthful Holiday Season

I love everything about the holidays, *especially* festive decorations, good food, friends & family gatherings and gift giving! But all that decorating, baking, socializing and holiday shopping can be a serious drain on time and energy, which can easily have negative consequences on our sleep, exercise and eating habits.

The holidays are brief, so we should certainly enjoy them, but part of that enjoyment should come from making *ourselves* and our health a priority too. To help us all get through the next few weeks, I put together these 11 tips for having a healthier holiday season:

1. Make sure yule log! Logging food and exercise keeps us accountable, but it can be slightly more burdensome, and maybe even a little bit scary this time of year with all of those tempting holiday party hors d'oeuvres, desserts and cocktails around. Taking the extra minute or two to log those pigs-in-a-blanket and that pomegranate martini can allow you to better budget those calories and plan an extra workout in advance, so you can stay on top of your goals!

2. Take a weight loss vacation. If weight loss is a goal of yours, put it on the back burner during the holidays. Just aim not to gain any weight instead! In the grand scheme of things, taking a short amount of time off from trying to lose weight won't hurt, but being overly ambitious in the face of all these holiday indulgences might be just discouraging enough to make you give up altogether.

3. Sign up for a New Year's race. Whether you're a walker, jogger, cyclist, swimmer or triathlete, there are lots of races happening during the holidays. New Year's Day races are great because training will keep you active during the hectic holiday season. Sign up friends and family members for more fun, support and motivation! Just search the web for a New Year's Day

race near you!

4. Put new workout gear on your gift wish list. It sounds superficial but nice workout gear really can make you feel better during a workout, and be an incentive to get you moving. Those breathable, comfortable and flattering fabrics can get pricey though, which is why adding them to your gift wish list is a win-win. Your friends and family will



enjoy giving you the gift of better health and you'll enjoy exercising more!

5. Plan one active outing for every holiday celebration. While you're adding those holiday parties and dinners to the calendar, pencil one active outing into your schedule as well. Participate in a holiday race, coordinate a family hike or sign up for a special workout class with a friend before the party begins!

6. Earn your treats before you indulge. Treats aren't really enjoyable if they just leave you feeling guilty afterwards. Eat healthfully during the day before heading out to that holiday party or work up a sweat before sitting down to a big holiday meal. You'll likely enjoy what you eat even more if you know you've earned it!

7. Sleep more. Sleep deprivation literally messes with your mind *and* your appetite. When deprived of sleep, the body produces more ghrelin, a "hunger hormone" that increases your desire to eat... and eat... and eat. Simply by getting enough sleep your body will better regulate those hunger cues all on its own, which will make it easier for you to moderate your consumption of those tasty, holiday appetizers and desserts.

8. Remix your own recipes. We all have our own holiday dish traditions, but sometimes making just one simple ingredient swap or poking around the internet for a healthier version of your favorite recipe can make a huge difference, without sacrificing flavor.



9. Weigh-in weekly. The point isn't to obsess over every pound or two, but crossing paths with a scale once a week can be used as an early warning system for preventing weight gain. If you don't own or don't like using a scale, a well-fitting pair of pants can give you just as much insight. Since muscle weighs more than fat, noticing how your pants fit might even be a better way to gauge if those workouts are helping you tone up and slim down.

10. Don't wait until January to start exercising. It's been shown that frequent exercise usually drops to its lowest point in the month of December. This makes now the perfect time to get to know your way around a new gym, find an exercise class you love and introduce yourself to a new trainer. Less people will be exercising, which means you'll get more attention! Getting your foot in the door will give you a jump-start, and an advantage over all those folks trying to make good on their New Year's resolutions. Plus, exercising during the holidays is a great way to relieve stress and offset those extra holiday treats.

11. Listen to your tummy. Our bodies have an amazing ability to regulate food intake, if we actually listen to them! If you overindulge at a holiday feast, hold off on eating until you truly feel hungry again. Don't eat just because there's only one slice of pie left on the table, or because your Christmas brunch begins at 10AM, sharp. If you're not hungry, sip on some tea or coffee while everyone else digs in, and make yourself a small plate for later. It'll be there when your tummy grumbles!

Have a very happy and healthy holiday season!



What's on Your Mind?

Have an idea for an article or a question about a health topic? Are you enjoying the newsletter?

[Click here to send me an email](#)

I want to hear from you!



Note to Self

With so much to be thankful for, perhaps the greatest of all illusions is that life could somehow be better than it already is.

Three Ways to Combat Winter Weight Gain

As the days are getting shorter and the nights are getting colder, you may notice heightened desire to kick back with a bowl of comfort food. If your appetite seems to rise as the temperature drops, you're not alone.

There's scientific evidence that your weight will follow a seasonal pattern, too. A study published in *Nature* found that both food patterns and body weight vary with the seasons. In this study, researchers found that participants ate more calories and fat in the fall compared with the spring. Physical activity was also lowest in winter and highest in spring, making it easier to put on winter pounds. Let's dig into a few reasons why you gain winter weight and follow up with a fix.



1. We crave high-calorie comfort foods.

If weather is to blame for our increased desire to eat, should we just accept winter weight gain as an inevitable part of the change in seasons? Not exactly. When we feel chilled, our body sends a self-preservation message to our brain to do whatever it can to warm up, which includes reaching for carbohydrate-heavy foods that provide that fastest 'heat' as quick-burning energy.

The Fix: To warm up without overloading on refined carbohydrates and excess calories, Choose warming foods that are still light and lean, like vegetable-based soups and hot teas. Broth-based soups can be an excellent way to warm up in cool weather months. In addition, consuming soup before a rich meal has been shown to help reduce overall calorie consumption.



2. Our emotional connection to food gets the best of us.

Do you find it hard to pass up Grandma's famous mashed potatoes or avoid Aunt Mary's homemade pie? Research has found that when we *know* a food has been made with love, we tend to eat more due to the emotional connection. Food is a great way to connect, and part of having a positive relationship with food means being able to eat all foods without feeling guilty. That being said, you shouldn't throw away your health goals, either. All it takes is a little planning!

The Fix: To survive the holiday season while maintaining a healthy weight, you have to understand the emotional sway some foods have over you. Instead of

eating on impulse, follow this simple tip: At a holiday meal, survey the entire table before filling your plate. Choose the handful of items you must try, then fill the rest of your plate with healthy eats like cut veggies and fruit.

Oftentimes, food gifts can be equally tempting opportunities to overeat. For those treats that are less than nutritious, you can reduce your portions and limit your intake simply by sharing.

Bring extra food gifts to your office. You may be less likely to overeat at work than at home—and in any case, the treats will be gone more quickly when sharing with co-workers. Bringing food gifts to holiday social events or donating them can also be a wonderful way to share the wealth with others without overdoing it on your own.

3. The winter blues can trigger a binge. Even if you live in a warmer climate, the shorter days and lack of daylight can make preventing winter weight gain a challenge. Seasonal affective disorder, a type of depression that is related to the changes in seasons, tends to occur in the fall and last throughout the winter months. Lack of daylight appears to be a

trigger for this form of depression, which can lead to low energy, decreased motivation and increased moodiness. Not only can this disorder lead to changes in mood, but it has been linked to an increase in binge eating as well.

The Fix: If you find that your mood and energy levels significantly alter as the seasons begins to change, discuss it with your doctor. There are many treatment options for SAD that may help to elevate your mood while reducing the desire to binge.



Although many factors can attribute to winter weight gain, focusing on the triggers unique to you is key to maintaining your weight. If you tend to gain weight in the winter, think back and examine what may have been the cause. Many times

weight gain can result from *how* you are eating rather than *what* you are eating. By recognizing your triggers, you can work to overcome these obstacles for a healthier winter.

- <http://journal.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00032/full>
- <http://www.nature.com/ejcn/journal/v60/n4/full/1602346a.html>

WELLNESS SPOTLIGHT

Happy Healthy Holidays

Nothing says holidays like...

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| APPRECIATION | KWANZAA |
| BLESSINGS | LAUGHTER |
| CELEBRATION | LOVE |
| CHRISTMAS | PEACE |
| DREIDEL | PROSPERITY |
| EGGNOG | REJOICE |
| FAMILY | RESOLUTIONS |
| FIREPLACE | REST |
| FRIENDS | SNOW |
| GIFTS | THANKSGIVING |
| GRATITUDE | TRADITIONS |
| HANUKKAH | TRAVEL |
| HOLIDAY | TURKEY |
| JOYFUL | VACATION |

HAPPY HEALTHY HOLIDAYS

T N L I N Q B W Q E Y Y V E R J A L V N S Y S G F
 W H O E I P S M Z N T M S V M E D I B A P P W A R
 A S A I V V E N J N I Y E K R U T N M W T L M T H
 F J C N T A K U P O R D G R A T I T U D E I A G Z
 S I O D K A R S P B E R S Z P O S D E Q L A O S L
 Y N R J K S C T W L P E O A P I H B T Y Z N R A C
 V J O E Z U G A S E S I R N R Z D U I N G K L E L
 G Y Q I P U F I V S O D K H E P O L A G K T L C U
 G S P M T L P W V S R E C C C I E W E B J E Z O F
 A U A X A I A B Q I P L C O I H K A H U B I B R Y
 O E U P R K D C V N N L F R A Q V A C R K G R P O
 H W N X S Z R A E G H G H N T Y M E A E I E Y M J
 H O X G N M R S R S I X U T I S U T L Q S W X H S
 Z U L I O X X D K T P K C S O G I F T S H J X O D
 L A R I W E Y U X B K U W S N O I T U L O S E R N
 B N T I D R D O F A D Y I O N V H K H W S U C P E
 D V P P E A C L H O T X Q K B M J E V O L X P W I
 M D N S P Z Y P M U N V H Z H Z X N W T I H Q R R
 R E T H G U A L G I C Q P C X R E J O I C E J I F
 P R N R D H Y P C O Z G Z S I Z T R V N L F U E X



The Sleep Weight Connection

Ever feel like you don't get enough sleep? You're not alone. The National Institutes of Health recommends dedicating 7–8 of the 24 hours we are given in a day to sleep. Yet, in a 2013 survey, the National Sleep Foundation found that Americans are getting an average of six and a half hours of sleep on work nights. According to a Gallup poll from the same year, 40% of us get less than the recommended amount, down more than an hour from 1942. A lot has changed since the 1940s, but our need for sleep has not.

Where Did Our Sleep Go?

In today's society, there's increased pressure for us to be tuned in, turned on and plugged in. This translates to a slow drain on our sleep account, especially if we aren't intentionally prioritizing rest. You may be sleep-deprived for a number of reasons, but here are a few of the most common ones:

- **You're lost without your screen time.**

Phones, tablets and other smart devices emit brain-activating lights, and, according to the NSF,

more than 95% of Americans use some type of gadget within an hour of going to bed.

- **You love a good buzz.** There's a craft beer, frothy cocktail and Starbucks on every corner — that's great for enhanced sociability, but all that caffeine and alcohol isn't doing much to help our sleep patterns.
- **You're all work and no rest.** *Work hard, play hard* is a detrimental attitude that's becoming widely accepted without an inclusion to *rest hard*. Americans are busier now than ever, working longer days, taking less vacation and retiring later. We are stressed, overworked and constantly comparing ourselves with others on social media and in the workplace. As a result, many of us would rather allocate free time to nonsleep activities.

Why Sleep Is Important

Sleep offers our bodies a chance to be restored and rejuvenated. And, this isn't just beauty sleep we are talking about here. Most of our body's major restorative functions — muscle growth, tissue repair, protein synthesis and growth hormone release — happens while we sleep. Sleep deprivation extends far beyond a little

grogginess, too. It impairs judgment (leading to more accidents on the road and at work), affects our cognitive ability, kills our sex drive, ages our skin and worsens our memory. It also may cause weight gain and has been linked to depression.

The Sleep-Weight Connection

There's a growing body of evidence that ties short sleep duration (getting less than 7–8 hours of shut-eye) with higher BMI's in both adults and children. In 2015, researchers at Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar presented evidence that cutting sleep by as little as 30 minutes per day can lead to weight gain. The researchers studied 522 participants with newly diagnosed Type 2 diabetes for 12 months, asking them to track sleep seven days a week. After a year, the researchers found that, for every 30 minutes of sleep debt accrued at baseline, the risk of obesity and insulin resistance significantly increased, by 17% and 39%, respectively.



Another study of just 30 participants published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition in 2011 found that sleep-deprived participants ate an average of 300 more calories per day, mostly in the form of saturated fats. But why? There's a hormonal imbalance associated with sleep deprivation. Inadequate sleep impacts ghrelin and leptin, two hormones that regulate hunger and fullness. Ghrelin signals to your brain that it's time to eat. The less you sleep, the more of this hormone your body tends to make. Leptin, on the other hand, signals to your brain that you're full.

Sleep deprivation actually causes production of leptin to drop, desensitizing your feeling of fullness. Tie the two together, and you've got one disastrous duo for weight control. But that's not all: There's a third hormone, cortisol, that may be involved as well. Cortisol is a stress hormone that signals the body to conserve energy (translation: store fat), and it spikes when we don't get enough sleep. While the study sample size was small, the findings are still insightful given that the participants were observed under well-controlled conditions.

5 Tips to Improve Your Sleeping Habits

Sleep is undervalued. Getting enough quality sleep is holistically tied to your health and weight-loss goals. Here are five tips to help you not only get a better-quality dose of zzz's but more of them, too:

1. **Turn your lights down an hour or so before bed.** Light after sundown can delay your body's natural clock from shifting into sleep mode. Darkness cues the release of melatonin, a hormone that will help you snooze.
2. **Reduce screen time at night.** More screen time means more brain stimulation, which is not sleep-friendly.
3. **Get more exercise into your day.** According to the NSF, adding even a few minutes of physical activity to your day makes a difference in your quality of sleep. This is supported by data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 2005–2006 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, which found that 150 minutes of moderate activity a week showed a 65% improvement in sleep quality. People who worked out felt less drowsy during the day, too.
4. **Track your sleep.** Use a pen-and-paper sleep diary, or invest in an activity monitor that records the number of sleep hours you get daily. After a few weeks, spot trends in your sleep pattern. Make it a priority to get at least seven hours of sleep daily, and track to keep yourself accountable. To spot more trends, record your alcohol and caffeine intake, exercise and any other factors that affect your slumber.
5. **Lay off the alcohol, caffeine and high-fat, high-protein foods too close to slumber.** Keep alcohol and caffeine as far away from bedtime as possible. Alcohol may make you sleepy, but alcohol-induced sleep is also less restful. Additionally, your body isn't designed to digest food while you're asleep. Protein and fat take longer to break down (making them great for breakfast!) and will keep your system awake longer.

Is sleep the solution to our current obesity epidemic? Not likely. But it can possibly help individuals better manage their weight. Think of sleep as nutrition for your brain and body. Feed them well.

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/sdd/howmuch>
<https://sleepfoundation.org/sites/default/files/RPT495a.pdf>
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18239586>

Crock Pot Coconut Curry Chicken

Anytime of year is crockpot time, especially for those who are on the go! Simple and very tasty, this recipe will rekindle the friendship you have with your slow cooker.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 lb boneless skinless chicken breasts or thighs, cut into cubes
- 5 large carrots, peeled and diced
- 1 medium onion, peeled and quartered
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 large bell pepper, seeded and chopped (I used a green pepper)
- 1 (5 oz) can tomato paste
- 1 (14 oz) can coconut milk
- 1 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp curry powder
- 1 tbsp garam masala
- 1 tsp crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 tbsp water
- 1 1/2 tbsp cornstarch

DIRECTIONS

1. Grease your slow cooker with Pam. Place the chicken and carrots on the bottom of slow cooker.
2. Place the rest of the ingredients (except water and corn starch) in a food processor and process together until mixture is mostly smooth. ***If your food processor is too small to hold everything, process everything but the coconut milk. Transfer mixture to a medium bowl then mix in the coconut milk.
3. Pour the sauce over the chicken and carrots, mix well, then cover and cook on low for about 6 hours.
4. An hour or so before serving, mix cornstarch and water together in a small bowl until cornstarch is dissolved. Pour mixture into the slow cooker, stir to combine, and continue cooking for another hour. **This will thicken up the sauce. When the sauce is to your desired thickness, turn slow cooker to warm setting until ready to serve.
5. Serve over rice, with Naan, and garnish with cilantro.



Self-Care for Family Caregivers

First, Care for Yourself

On an airplane, an oxygen mask descends in front of you. What do you do? As we all know, the first rule is to put on your own oxygen mask before you assist anyone else. Only when we first help ourselves can we effectively help others. Caring for yourself is one of the most important—and one of the most often forgotten—things you can do as a caregiver.

When your needs are taken care of, the person you care for will benefit, too.

Effects of Caregiving on Health and Well Being

We hear this often: "My husband is the person with Alzheimer's, but now I'm the one in the hospital!" Such a situation is all too common. Researchers know a lot about the effects of caregiving on health and well-being. The combination of loss, prolonged stress, the physical demands of caregiving, and the biological vulnerabilities that come with age place you at risk for significant health problems as well as an earlier death.

Family caregivers of any age are less likely than non-caregivers to practice preventive healthcare and self-care behavior. Regardless of age, sex, and race and ethnicity, caregivers report problems attending to their own health and well-being while managing caregiving responsibilities. They report:

- sleep deprivation
- poor eating habits
- failure to exercise
- failure to stay in bed when ill
- postponement of or failure to make medical appointments for themselves

Family caregivers are also at increased risk for depression and excessive use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Caregiving can be an emotional roller coaster.

On the one hand, caring for your family member demonstrates love and commitment and can be a very rewarding personal experience. On the other hand, exhaustion, worry, inadequate resources and continuous care demands are enormously stressful.

Taking Responsibility for Your Own Care

You cannot stop the impact of a chronic or progressive illness or a debilitating injury on someone for whom you care. But there is a great deal that you can do to take responsibility for your personal well-being and to



get your own needs met.

Identifying Personal Barriers

Many times, attitudes and beliefs form personal barriers that stand in the way of caring for yourself. Not taking care of yourself may be a lifelong pattern, with taking care of others an easier option. However, as a family caregiver you must ask yourself, "What good will I be to the person I care for if I become ill?" Breaking old patterns and overcoming obstacles is not an easy proposition, but it can be done—regardless of your age or situation. The first task in removing personal barriers to self-care is to identify what is in your way. For example:

- Do you think you are being selfish if you put your needs first?
- Is it frightening to think of your own needs? What is the fear about?
- Do you have trouble asking for what you need? Do you feel inadequate if you ask for help?
- Do you feel you have to prove that you are worthy of the care recipient's affection? Do you do too much as a result?

Sometimes caregivers have misconceptions that increase their stress and get in the way of good self-care. Here are some of the most commonly expressed:

- I am responsible for my parent's health.
- If I don't do it, no one will.
- If I do it right, I will get the love, attention, and respect I deserve.
- Our family always takes care of their own
- I promised my father I would always take care of my mother.

Because we base our behavior on our thoughts and beliefs, attitudes and misconceptions like those noted above can cause caregivers to continually attempt to do what cannot be done, to control what cannot be controlled. The result is feelings of continued failure and frustration and, often, an inclination to ignore your own needs. Ask yourself what might be getting in your way and keeping you from taking care of yourself.

Moving Forward

Once you've started to identify any personal barriers to

good self-care, you can begin to change your behavior, moving forward one small step at a time. Following are some effective tools for self-care that can start you on your way.

Tool #1: Reducing Personal Stress

How we perceive and respond to an event is a significant factor in how we adjust and cope with it. The stress you feel is not only the result of your caregiving situation but also the result of your perception of it—whether you see the glass as half-full or half-empty. It is important to remember that you are not alone in your experiences.

Your level of stress is influenced by many factors, including the following:

- Whether your caregiving is voluntary. If you feel you had no choice in taking on the responsibilities, the chances are greater that you will experience strain, distress, and resentment.
- Your relationship with the care recipient. Sometimes people care for another with the hope of healing a relationship. If healing does not occur, you may feel regret and discouragement.
- Your coping abilities. How you coped with stress in the past predicts how you will cope now. Identify your current coping strengths so that you can build on them.
- Your caregiving situation. Some caregiving situations are more stressful than others. For example, caring for a person with dementia is often more stressful than caring for someone with a physical limitation.
- Whether or not support is available.

Steps to Managing Stress

- Recognize warning signs early. These might include irritability, sleep problems, and forgetfulness. Know your own warning signs, and act to make changes. Don't wait until you are overwhelmed.
- Identify sources of stress. Ask yourself, "What is causing stress for me?" Sources of stress might be that you have too much to do, family disagreements, feelings of inadequacy, or the inability to say no.
- Identify what you can and cannot change. Remember, we can only change ourselves; we cannot change another person. When you try to change things over which you have no control, you will only increase your sense of frustration. Ask yourself, "What do I have some control over? What can I

be good to yourself

Continued on page 5

When "I" is replaced by "We"
Even illness becomes wellness.

Self Care for Caregivers *cont.*

change?" Even a small change can make a big difference. The challenge we face as caregivers is well expressed in the following words modified from the original Serenity Prayer (attributed to American Theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr):

*"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
and (the) wisdom to know the difference."*

- Take action. Taking some action to reduce stress gives us back a sense of control. Stress reducers can be simple activities like walking and other forms of exercise, gardening, meditation or having coffee with a friend. Identify some stress reducers that work for you.

Tool #2: Asking for and Accepting Help

When people have asked if they can be of help to you, how often have you replied, "Thank you, but I'm fine." Many caregivers don't know how to marshal the goodwill of others and are reluctant to ask for help. You may not wish to "burden" others or admit that you can't handle everything yourself.

Be prepared with a mental list of ways that others could help you. For example, someone could take the person you care for on a 15-minute walk a couple of times a week. Your neighbor could pick up a few things for you at the grocery store. A relative could fill out some insurance papers. When you break down the jobs into very simple tasks, it is easier for people to help. And they do want to help. It is up to you to tell them how.

Help can come from community resources, family, friends and professionals. Ask them. Don't wait until you are overwhelmed and exhausted or your health fails. Reaching out for help when you need it is a sign of personal strength.

Tips on How to Ask

- Consider the person's special abilities and interests. If you know a friend enjoys cooking but dislikes driving, your chances of getting help improve if you ask for help with meal preparation.
- Resist asking the same person repeatedly. Do you

keep asking the same person because she has trouble saying no?

- Pick the best time to make a request. Timing is important. A person who is tired and stressed might not be available to help out. Wait for a better time.
- Prepare a list of things that need doing. The list might include errands, yard work, or a visit with your loved one. Let the "helper" choose what she would like to do.
- Be prepared for hesitance or refusal. It can be upsetting for the caregiver when a person is unable or unwilling to help. But in the long run, it would do more harm to the relationship if the person helps only because he doesn't want to upset you. To the person who seems hesitant, simply say, "Why don't you think about it." Try not to take it personally when a request is turned down. The person is turning down the task, not you. Try not to let a refusal prevent you from asking for help again. The person who refused today may be happy to help at another time.
- Avoid weakening your request. "It's only a thought, but would you consider staying with Grandma while I went to church?" This request sounds like it's not very important to you. Use "I" statements to make specific requests: "I would like to go to church on Sunday. Would you stay with Grandma from 9 a.m. until noon?"

Tool #3: Learning from Our Emotions

It is a strength to recognize when your emotions are controlling you (instead of you controlling your emotions). Our emotions are messages to which we need to listen. They exist for a reason. However negative or painful, our feelings are useful tools for understanding what is happening to us. Even feelings such as guilt, anger and resentment contain important messages. Learn from them, then take appropriate action.

For example, when you cannot enjoy activities you previously enjoyed, and your emotional pain over-shadows all pleasure, it is time to seek treatment for depression—especially if you are having thoughts of suicide. Speaking with your physician is the first step. (Please refer to the Fact Sheet on Caregiving and Depression, listed below.)

Caregiving often involves a range of emotions. Some feelings are more comfortable than others. When you find that

your emotions are intense, they might mean the following:

- That you need to make a change in your caregiving situation.
- That you are grieving a loss.
- That you are experiencing increased stress.
- That you need to be assertive and ask for what you need.

Summing Up

Remember, it is not selfish to focus on your own needs and desires when you are a caregiver—it's an important part of the job. You are responsible for your own self-care. Focus on the following self-care practices:

- Learn and use stress-reduction techniques, e.g. meditation, prayer, yoga, Tai Chi.
- Attend to your own healthcare needs.
- Get proper rest and nutrition.
- Exercise regularly, if only for 10 minutes at a time.
- Take time off without feeling guilty.
- Participate in pleasant, nurturing activities, such as reading a good book, taking a warm bath.
- Seek and accept the support of others.
- Seek supportive counseling when you need it, or talk to a trusted counselor, friend, or pastor.
- Identify and acknowledge your feelings, you have a right to ALL of them.
- Change the negative ways you view situations.
- Set goals.

It's up to you!

Shultz, Richard and Beach, Scott (1999). *Caregiving as A Risk for Mortality: The Caregiver Health Effects Study*. JAMA, December 15, 1999 - Vol. 282, No.23

The Caregiver Helpbook: Powerful Tools for Caregivers
Schmall, V, Cleland, M, Sturdevant, M, . Legacy Health Systems.(2000)

Additional Resources

Family Caregiver Alliance Fact Sheets
(www.caregiver.org/fact-sheets)

Oatmeal Pancakes

Here's an interesting and healthy way to add oats to your morning meal. Not only are they tasty, they are a good source of healthy protein and fiber!

Ingredients

- 1.1 ounces all-purpose flour (1/4 cup)
- 1 cup quick-cooking oats
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup nonfat buttermilk
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 large egg



Directions

Weigh or lightly spoon flour into a dry measuring cup; level with a knife. Combine the first 7 ingredients in a medium bowl, stirring with a whisk.

Combine buttermilk, butter, and egg in a small bowl. Add to flour mixture, stirring just until moist.

Heat a nonstick griddle over medium heat. Coat pan with cooking spray. Spoon about 2 1/2 tablespoons batter per pancake onto griddle. Turn pancakes over when tops are covered with bubbles; cook until bottoms are lightly browned.