



What Are the Caregiver's Rights?

Caring for someone you love after a heart or stroke event is a difficult task that very few people are prepared for. The responsibilities and the emotional stress can sometimes cause you to forget to take care of yourself. These Rights will help you remember 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. This is not an act of selfishness. It will enable me to take better care of my loved one.
- To seek help from others even though my loved one may object. I recognize the limits of my own endurance and strength.
- To maintain facets of my own life that don't include the person I care for, just as I would if he or she were healthy. I know that I do everything that I reasonably can for this person, and I have the right to do some things for myself.
- To get angry, be depressed and express other difficult emotions occasionally.
- To reject any attempt (either conscious or unconscious) to manipulate me through guilt, anger or depression.
- To receive consideration, affection, forgiveness and acceptance from my loved one for as long as I offer these qualities in return.
- To take pride in what I am accomplishing and to applaud the courage it sometimes takes to meet the needs of my loved one.
- To protect my individuality and my right to make a life for myself that will sustain me when my loved one no longer needs my full-time help.
- To expect and demand that, as new strides are made in finding resources to aid physically and mentally impaired persons in our country, similar strides will be made toward aiding and supporting caregivers.

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 or highlight the ones you are most likely to sacrifice. Sharing this list of rights

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 do I find support?

If you need help taking care of yourself while caring for a loved one, ask for information at the doctor's office.

Be very specific when you ask family and friends for help in getting the time you need to take care of yourself.

Call 1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721) or visit americanheart.org to learn more about caring for someone with heart disease.

For information on caring for someone with stroke, call 1-888-4-STROKE (1-888-478-7653) or visit us online at StrokeAssociation.org.

What are the warning signs of heart attack and stroke?

Warning Signs of Heart Attack

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense, but most of them start slowly with mild pain or discomfort with one or more of these symptoms:

- **Chest discomfort**
- **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body**
- **Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort**
- **Other signs including breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness**

Warning Signs of Stroke

- **Sudden weakness or numbness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body**
- **Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding**
- **Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes**
- **Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination**
- **Sudden, severe headache with no known cause**

Learn to recognize a stroke. Time lost is brain lost.

Call 9-1-1 ... Get to a hospital immediately if you experience signs of a heart attack or stroke!

Do you have questions or comments for your doctor?

Take a few minutes to write your own questions for the next time you see your healthcare provider. For example:

Where can I find someone to sit with my loved one an hour a day?
