

JUNE 19, 2024

MCHD HEALTH BLOG

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MORGAN COUNTY HEALTH DEPT.



ALZHEIMER'S AWARENESS MONTH

Did you know that June is Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month? According to www.alz.org, "Alzheimer's is a type of dementia that affects memory, thinking and behavior. Symptoms eventually grow severe enough to interfere with daily tasks." Alzheimer's is not a normal part of aging, it worsens over time, and unfortunately there is no cure. Caregivers for those with Alzheimer's face special challenges as their loved one's disease progresses. Many caregivers work tirelessly to make sure their loved one is as safe and healthy as they can be. They also advocate for their loved one and may assist in decision-making.

If you are a caregiver, you may find yourself with so many responsibilities that you neglect taking good care of yourself. But the best thing you can do for the person you are caring for is stay physically and emotionally strong. Here are some tips about how to be a healthy caregiver:

- See your healthcare provider for an annual check-up. Talk to him/her about any symptoms you may be experiencing.
- Be physically active. Exercise can help relieve stress, prevent disease, and make you feel good. Short on time? Start small! While it is recommended that you get 30 minutes of physical activity at least five days a week, even 10 minutes a day can help. Fit in what you can, and work toward a goal. There are also many ways to be active with your loved one, such as going on a walk, doing seated exercises, or dancing to favorite music together.
- Eat well. Having a balanced diet will make you feel better and give you energy. Try new recipes and invite your loved one into the kitchen with you to cook. For recommendations based on your age, weight, height, and physical activity level, visit www.MyPlate.gov.
- Cope well with stress. Note any symptoms of stress to your healthcare provider, such as behavioral changes, stomach irritation, or high blood pressure. Talk to a counselor about relaxation techniques. Take breaks as you are able. Surround yourself with a support system that will assist you and talk with you.

If you or someone you know is a caregiver for a person with Alzheimer's then it is important to know how to take care of yourself. For more information and resources, visit <https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving>.