Being the Best Lupus Caregiver You Can Be

by YVONNE BANKS

Caring for Someone With Lupus

Caring for someone with lupus can be difficult. Any person with the affliction is on a rollercoaster of flare-ups and uncertainty of what it will bring next.

As a caregiver, there will be times when you need to make sacrifices, because your loved one with lupus will have needs that have to be met above all else. However, you need to be sure your needs are being met as well so you do not burn out.

Learn All You Can

Learning about the disease arms you with knowledge so you can better interact with health professionals — you will ask the right questions when talking with the doctor. When researching online, be sure to seek out credible sources.

Ask For Help

It is not a sign of weakness to ask for help or accept help offered. Accepting help is as much for your own good as it is for your loved one with lupus.

Help can come from friends and family and health professionals, or our community may have support groups and other helpful resources.

Take Time for Yourself

Even if caring for your loved one takes up a lot of your time, you still need to make time to keep in touch with friends and enjoy the things that make you happy. If you can’t meet up with people, call or email them to catch up. You need to have an outlet.

Be Prepared for a Flare

It is important to recognize the early warning signs of a flare, which can be different in each person with lupus. They include increased joint pain, elevated body temperature, hair thinning, and increased fatigue.

It is of utmost importance to be prepared for a flare-up before it actually happens. Consider assembling a lupus comfort kit for your loved one, and have the following information about your loved one available in case you need to give it to a healthcare professional:

- Symptoms

- Diagnosis
- Drug allergies
- Organ involvement
- Complications
- Medical history
- Hospitalizations
- Surgeries and dates
- Medications patient currently takes
- Names and contact information for all physicians
- Names and contact information for two family members

This list will help ensure they receive the best medical assistance as soon as possible when a bad flare happens. It is best to be prepared for the unexpected, so you won't be fumbling around for needed information at the time it is needed.

It is so important for you as a caregiver do what you can to keep yourself healthy and mentally refreshed as much as possible. It doesn't do your loved one any good if you lose focus and are not up to par in caring for him or her.