

Directory for further information / support

General support

CRISP Carers Support Service

Tel: 01202 458204

Email: carersupport@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Online: www.crispweb.org

NHS One You

The One You site is designed to help you make changes to fit your life and make you feel good. It provides tips, tools, support and encouragement. Visit the website for more information: www.nhs.uk/oneyou

Eating Well

British Heart Foundation - Healthy eating on a budget:

www.bhf.org.uk/information/support/support/healthy-living/healthy-eating/healthy-eating-on-a-budget

NHS Eating Well - www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/

Getting enough sleep

Carers Assist - Free assistive technology for 'peace of mind' at home. Contact CRISP Carer Support Service -

Tel: 01202 458204

Email: carersupport@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Mindfulness Apps - Downloadable to your phone or tablet

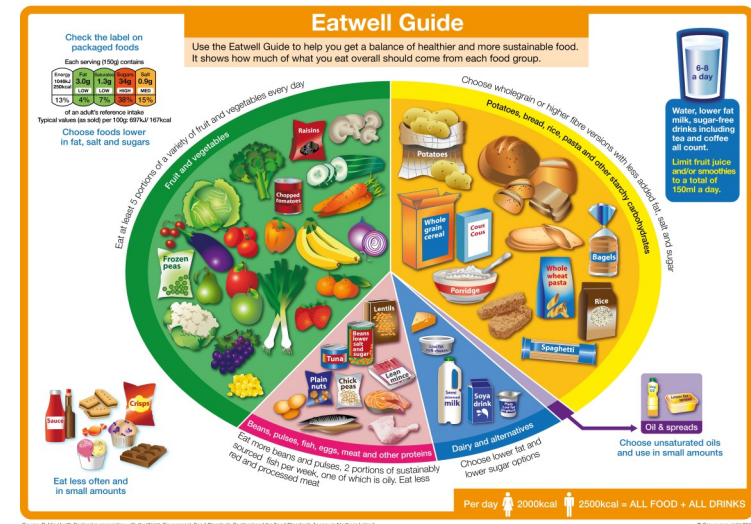
Calm

Headspace

Eating Well

As a carer, eating a good balanced diet is important to give your body all of the nutrients it needs. A healthy and balanced diet can help keep your body strong and give you the energy you need to look after your loved one and yourself. For a balanced diet each day, the Eatwell Guide suggests that you should try to:

- Eat at least five portions of fruit or vegetables
- Base meals on starchy foods such as bread, pasta, potatoes and cereals - these are a good source of energy.
- Have some protein, such as meat, fish, eggs and pulses
- Eat some low-fat dairy products, such as milk, cheese and yoghurt
- Choose unsaturated oils and spreads and have small amounts.
- Drink plenty of fluids (at least 6-8 glasses a day) - this does not mean alcohol, as too much of this can be bad for your wellbeing.



More information can be found on the NHS website:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/>

Getting enough sleep

It can be difficult to get a good night's sleep when you are a carer. The person you care for may need help at night, or you may feel unable to leave them. Whilst it is sometimes easier said than done, getting enough sleep can make a real difference to how you feel.



If you are struggling to sleep, you could try the following:

- Try to go to bed at the same time each night, and get up at the same time each morning.
- Make your bedroom a screen free zone, and try not to use a computer or phone late at night as this can disturb your sleep pattern.
- Spend some time relaxing before bed - a warm bath may help, or try some relaxation techniques. You could try tapes and books which are available from your library, or there are apps available on your phone such as Calm or Headspace.
- Keep a notepad by your bed, so that if you are worried about something you can jot it down and be ready to deal with it the next day.
- If you cannot sleep, try not to lie there worrying. Get up and do something you find relaxing like reading, or listening to quiet music. After a while, you may feel tired enough to go to bed again.

Some carers feel that they need to 'keep one eye and ear open' at night, just in case. There may be equipment available to help give you peace of mind. This is called a 'Carers Assist'.

To find out more, contact the CRISP Carers Support Service:
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Email: carersupport@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

You may find it helpful to build a self-care 'toolkit'. These are things you can 'reach' for when you need some you time.

- **Listening to music** can lift your mood and address isolation, with singing/dancing, and movement helping your body and mood by releasing endorphins
- **Talking helps** - ring a friend, go for coffee, have a chat. There is no shame in asking for help or admitting you are finding it tough or struggling to cope. Remember you're not on your own even if you may feel isolated, there are people who care and there to help support you.
- **Inspire your creativity** - make something, learn a new skill, start a jigsaw, set yourself a photo project, painting, poetry etc. can help to distract or we can express our feelings or an event into something creative.
- **Laugh more** Watch comedy or something that makes you laugh, it's proven to be therapeutic!
- **Connect with nature**, go for a walk, stop and listen to the birds, observe the sky above & what's around you, explore all your senses as you slow down and breathe easy. Try swinging your arms loosely as you walk and noticing where you hold tension when walking.
- **Exercise/movement** – stretching, Pilates, yoga, keep fit, dance. Go slow, explore what is safe for you and what you enjoy doing. Remember there are all sorts of classes available if you find it hard to keep up momentum or discipline. It is important to keep joints and muscles supple and mobile but also to work our bodies to get the circulation and heart going.
- **Breathing** exercises – there are many of these for calming, energising etc. but the main thing to remember is the outbreath is longer and that we can distract our mind by counting the in and out breaths. E.g. Breathing in for 4 and out for 7. Do remember this will increase oxygen flow to brain and body, so best to sit down when first practising just in case you feel a little light-headed.

Here are some short mindful and calming exercises you may want to try. You may want to take some time to read them beforehand

Short mindfulness exercise:

Holding focus on you in the present moment, take a moment to stop.

Let your eyes close if you are able (it helps to shut out visual stimuli).

Notice your posture and how you are sitting or standing.

Can you feel your back on the chair, or feet on the floor?

Become aware of your breathing and its rhythm as air enters and as it leaves your body

How does it feel? Does it sit high in your chest or low in the belly? Is it fast or slow?

Are you aware of any other body sensations?

Is there tension held anywhere?

Maybe a tight jaw or shoulders? Furrowed brow?

Does this change if you allow yourself a little smile?

Give yourself permission to soften and breath in this moment.

It's normal to become aware of feelings and thoughts, just acknowledge them and practise bringing your attention back to the sensation of breathing.

You are safe and well. All is okay.

“Calmspace” visualisation exercise:

Close your eyes and think of the word “Calm” – what do you see?

Allow a picture to build this calm scene in your minds eye, with colours, sights, sounds, smells.

This is your calm place, you can make it look however you want in your imagination

Can you picture what you are doing there in your calm place?

Are you sitting, walking, lying in the grass, smiling?

Build as much detail as possible and remember you can recall this, your calm space, at any time as it offers sanctuary and a safe, calm space to just be you.

Breath in calm, breathe out tension

Physical Health and Wellbeing

Caring for someone can be physically demanding. You may be helping the person you care for to stand or get dressed, or supporting them to get around. Whatever the case, it is important to look after your physical health and wellbeing.

Caring for your back

If you are regularly having to lift the person you care for, or help them in and out of bed or a chair, this can put strain on your back. If you need to do this, it can be beneficial to have someone to demonstrate the correct techniques.

You can consider asking Adult Social Care for an assessment of the person you care for. For advice and guidance on moving and handling, you can ask for an Occupational Therapy assessment. They may also be able to provide equipment to make supporting someone safer and easier.

To request an assessment for the person you care for, contact:

Care Direct (if the person you care for lives in Bournemouth or Christchurch), Tel: 01202 454979

Helpdesk (if the person you care for lives in Poole),
Tel: 01202 633902

Staying Active

Caring for someone may leave you feeling worn out, but taking some time to do some exercise for yourself can fill you with energy and can help you to keep healthy and well, as well as physically fitter and stronger.

The NHS suggests that you should aim to be physically active everyday, and aim for 150 minutes of exercise a week. You could exercise for 30 minutes a day or break it down further into 10 minute bursts that you can fit into your day. Any activity is better than none, and more is better still.

Swimming, walking, running, dancing, and cycling can help to keep you fit and strengthen your back. Yoga and Pilates are also good to keep you strong. Whatever you choose to do, do something you enjoy!

If it is difficult for you to attend a class, here are lots of online guides available on the NHS website:
<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/>

Taking care of your health

As a carer, your own medical appointments might not seem like a priority. But, if you put off your own health needs, any problems you do have may get worse. Getting anything you are worried about checked early, can make sure that further problems are prevented and you can stay well for longer.

Letting your GP know you are a carer

Your GP practice will be able to help you to look after your health better if they know you are caring. A confidential note can be placed on your records that will help your doctor look after your health.

They can also try to support you with convenient appointments that fit in with caring and offer you a free annual flu vaccination.

Some words and tips from Sharon at Touchenergy

Sharon Bull *MMTI, ITEC Dip, Grad.IPD, Cert.Ed* is the founder of Touchenergy (complementary therapies, coaching and workshops for health & wellbeing) - www.touchenergy.co.uk

When we can't change what is causing our stress, we can look to change our response to it through building our own relaxation and selfcare toolkit. Making or prioritising time for yourself can be more difficult as a carer, but it's really important to schedule in some "youtime" to recharge and improve your own wellbeing, as it's likely that nothing will change otherwise and your physical, mental and emotional health may suffer.

Relaxation is a skill like any other that takes practice but you can do it anywhere so try to build in some of the ideas below, little and often where possible in your day, remembering that small positive changes can make all the difference to how you feel you are coping, whatever your situation.

Relaxation is what happens when we stop creating tension, stop thinking and just start being. You can practice mindfulness or have a little arm stretch or circle your ankles whilst waiting for the kettle to boil!

Mindfulness practice is recognised by the NHS as effective in reducing anxiety, insomnia, stress, depression and low mood as well as a host of other benefits that support our health and wellbeing by being more present to the moment rather than lost in unhelpful thoughts, pain or busy lives. The mastery lies in repetition, practising little and often, to train our attention and accepting what is present for us right now, rather than worrying or feeling guilty about what has happened already or projecting our fears into the future. It's about noticing mind, body and emotions in the moment, accepting them without criticism or judgement, but with kindness and curiosity as we learn to move from our over active brains into the felt sensations of our bodies. Be patient with yourself and remember there is no right or wrong with relaxation, only practice! There's plenty of groups, classes and exercises online or in person available to you.

Wellbeing and Mental Health Support

Your emotional health can be impacted by your caring role, or the wellbeing of the person you care for.

Some signs you may be struggling with mental ill health include:

- Experiencing low moods.
- Worrying or feeling anxious a lot.
- Extreme tiredness, sometimes combined with not being able to sleep, or sleeping too much.
- Lack of concentration.
- Feeling extremely energetic, and not being able to wind down.
- Avoiding going out or seeing people.
- Changes in your eating habits or appetite.

It is important to take notice of these things, and realise that it is okay to ask for help.

You can get support for your mental health by:

- Contacting your GP. It is always okay to seek help, even if you are not experiencing a specific mental health problem.
- Steps2Wellbeing offer therapy or support for those experiencing low mood, anxiety or related mental health conditions. You can self-refer to Steps2Wellbeing.

Online: www.steps2wellbeing.co.uk

By phone:

Bournemouth and Christchurch—0300 790 0542

Poole—0300 123 1120

Urgent Help

If you require urgent mental health support, you can contact the 24/7 Connections phoneline. They will signpost you to the right service for the support you need. Telephone: 0300 123 5440.

Or, you can contact the Samaritans in confidence, 24/7 on 116 123.

Emotional Wellbeing

It can be emotionally challenging to look after someone, and it can leave you feeling worried, stressed or frustrated. As a carer, it is important to look after your mental health and wellbeing.

Keep Connected

Family and friends can be a really good source of support. Whether you want to talk about your emotions or just chat, staying in touch with loved ones is good for your wellbeing.

You may find it easier to talk to someone outside of your circle of family or friends, and it is important to remember that you are not alone. The CRISP Carers Support Service are here for you if you want (or need) any information, advice, or just need to talk:

Tel: 01202 458204

Email: carersupport@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

There is also an online Facebook Group called CRISP - Carers Forum. It is a great place to talk to people in similar situations - let off steam, share frustrations or look for advice. The group is closed and membership is limited to those who are on the Carers Information Service so anything you talk about stays between you and other carers within the group.

Make time for yourself

It is important to make time for yourself if you can. Having time apart from the person you care for can be good for both of you.

It is important not to lose track of the things you love doing. Whether you enjoy reading a book, knitting or learning something new. Or you could try exercising mindfulness, even just by listening to music. It is important to find time in your day for you too - even if it is only for a short time.

If you are struggling to find time for yourself, you may consider asking for a carer's assessment.

A carer's assessment is a conversation with a professional social care worker about how being a carer affects you and the way you are able to live your life. It is an opportunity to make sure you have all the information you need and a chance to find out about the services and support that could help you in your caring role.

To find out more information, contact the CRISP Carers Support Service

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Keep to a daily routine

Finding a routine that works for you and the person you care for can help give you both a sense of purpose, pass the time, and help you manage feelings of stress or worry.

You could try writing a weekly plan to help keep you on track, remembering to include time for you where possible, such as time for reading, gardening or exercising.

Stay active and healthy

As well as helping you to feel physically fitter and stronger, exercise is good for your mental health. It releases chemicals which can lift your mood. Exercising during the day can also help you sleep better. Try adding exercise to your daily routine.

It is also important to eat well and have a balanced diet.

Dealing with guilt

A lot of people feel guilty that they are not the perfect carer. They may start to feel guilty if they are frustrated or when they try to take time for themselves.

It is important to remember you are coping as well as you can. If you start to feel overwhelmed, remember to ask for help.

Taking a Break

Taking a break from your caring responsibilities is vital. Caring can be emotionally and physically demanding, so it is important not to overlook your own needs.

You can find out about opportunities to take a break through the CRISP Carers Support Service.

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Email: carersupport@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Online: www.crispweb.org

In some situations, ways for you to have a break may be provided by adult social care after your carers assessment or after the person you care for has had an assessment.

To find out more information about having a carers assessment, contact the Carers Support Service

Tel: 01202 458204

Email: carersupport@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Getting help for the person you care for

Social care support may be available for the person you care for. This may include training to regain lost skills, personal care, activities during the day, equipment to help with daily living or adaptations to your home. All of which may support you in your caring role too.

To find out if the person you care for qualifies for social care support, you can ask for a social care assessment.

To ask for a social care assessment, contact:

Helpdesk (if the person you care for lives in Poole,

Tel: 01202 633902

Care Direct (if the person you care for lives in Bournemouth or Christchurch, Tel: 01202 454979