



December, 2016



### **Take Care of Your Back!**

*Caregivers can hurt their back very easily with lifting their loved one, carrying medical equipment, moving furniture, etc. I found this article in a recent chiropractic newsletter. It has a lot of good information. I also intend to pass on some of this info to my children regarding heavy school backpacks. Maybe you will want to do the same. This article came from [alixchiropractic.com](http://alixchiropractic.com). --Karen*

Large purses are in style and backpacks are so convenient. They both hold everything you need, which is very good for people on the go. Although convenient, improper use of these bags can lead to problems for your back. Carrying heavy purses and backpacks leads to misalignments of the neck and mid back and causes pain and stiffness. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that backpack-related injuries sent more than 7,000 people to the emergency room in 2000 alone.

A good practice is that any purse, tote bag or backpack should not be heavier than 5% of your body weight. This means that a 100-pound person should not carry a purse or backpack that weighs more than 5 pounds. Most people fill their purse and backpack to capacity and they are on their way. Many people carry computer cases that exceed this weight by the computer alone, which weighs 5-8 pounds.

Put your backpack or purse on your shoulder. Is one shoulder higher than the other to compensate for the weight of the bag? Imagine carrying it for several hours and the potential injury becomes a reality.

A disturbing new trend is back pain in children. Backpacks are the cause of a majority of these injuries. When we consider the 5% rule, we can see why children are injuring their backs. For example, a 70-pound child should not carry a backpack that weighs more than 3.5 pounds. The backpack alone weighs close to 2 pounds, not to mention the 10 pounds of books and supplies that is in the backpack. Many children opt to wear their backpack on one shoulder, which increases the risk of injury. The longer a child wears an overweight backpack, the more damage that is done to the spine.

## Tips on reducing back pain from large purses and backpacks

- Make sure that the load you are carrying does not exceed more than 10% of your total body weight.
- The bag or backpack should not hang more than 4 inches below the waistline. Instead of one large purse, consider a smaller purse and an additional tote bag for the extras.
- Utilize the small compartments in a backpack. This distributes the weight more evenly and reduces the risk of injury.



## Short-Term or Long Term Home Care

A friend suffered a stroke a few months ago, and I've been listening to their dilemma of finding home care, therapists, and battling the maze of insurance decisions and trying to figure out how they will pay for everything. Short-term care can last a few weeks or a few months.

Long-term care is generally prescribed for those with chronic or progressive conditions such as Parkinson's disease, dementia or a debilitating stroke. Regular skilled nursing care (sometimes around the clock) may be needed.

Costs for care depend on a few factors. First, the level of care required will influence the cost. An aide helping with bathing and companionship will be less expensive than a skilled nurse who visits daily. The area where you live is important because if you live near or in a populated city such as New York City, the rates will typically be higher than small town or rural.

"Do your homework, ask lots of questions and know as much about the type of care your loved one needs as possible. Understanding pricing structures before signing a contract is as important as finding the right caregiver for your parent," says Lori Johnston, writer for AgingCare.com.



## Nine Ways to Get Someone to Eat by Jennifer Buckley, Caregiver.com

A common nutritional problem that can affect care recipients in poor health is cachexia-anorexia and it especially involves those in advanced stages of Alzheimer's, Cancer, and AIDS. Cachexia anorexia is a syndrome in which progressive and involuntary weight loss occurs. The people with this disorder are "wasting away" from the lack of vitamins and nutrients and as a caregiver, this can be a difficult and frustrating event to witness.

The syndrome can be attributed to cancer treatments, medications, physiological problems like an obstructing tumor in the gastrointestinal track or psychological problems like depression. It is also possible the person you are caring for has a loss of appetite simply from not feeling well. Caregiver.com has come up with a list of ways to help your care recipient eat. This list doesn't necessarily reflect the needs of care recipients on special needs diets such as diabetes or restricted salt intake diets. Remember to consult your physician about the specific dietary needs of your loved one.

1. Water, water, water. Make sure the person you are caring for has plenty of water to avoid dehydration, which can lead to appetite suppression.
2. Keep it small. Instead of three large meals a day, which can look overwhelming to someone in poor health, serve six small meals a day.
3. Bulk up on the amount of calories per meal. For instance, you can add protein powder mix to shakes or drinks to increase calories.
4. Soft is better. Serve soft foods such as pudding, ice cream or fruit smoothies because they can be tasty and easy to digest.
5. Make it tasty. Don't serve bland or sour-tasting foods.
6. Put the power in their hands. When possible, give the person you are caring for the decision-making power to decide what they would like to eat; it helps them to feel in control.
7. Make it pretty. Present appetizing-looking meals by accenting the plate with a garnish (i.e. strawberry or melon). Also, make the dining experience pleasant for the person you are caring for by playing soft music or talking to them about the day's events while they are eating to take their minds off not feeling well.
8. Write it down. Keep a food diary about the person you are caring for and include: what food they have problems or complications digesting and their daily food menus, and review it with their doctor or dietician for feedback. They may be experiencing digestive problems or irritable bowel syndrome due to their menu.
9. Work it out. Try and get them moving to work up an appetite. If overall exercise such as walking isn't possible, have them fold the laundry or peel vegetables. Anything to get the body moving, even if it's just legs, ankles, arms, etc.



## Recipe Corner

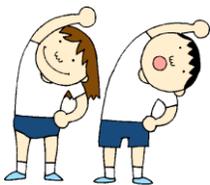


### Spinach Artichoke Dip

- 1 (10 oz.) pkg. frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained
- 1 (13.75 oz.) can quartered artichoke hearts, chopped and drained
- 1 cup light sour cream or plain Greek yogurt
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 oz. low fat cream cheese, room temperature
- 4 oz. (about 1 cup) shredded part skim Mozzarella cheese
- 2/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/3 cup finely chopped onions
- ½ tsp. black pepper
- ¼ tsp. salt

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Stir all ingredients together in a bowl until blended. Transfer to an oven proof dish and bake for 20-25 minutes or until the cheese is melted. Serve immediately with pita chips, chopped veggies, or whatever sounds good to you.



## Who Me? Exercise?

Yes, you! 😊 Over the years I have mentioned that even three ten-minute sessions is as beneficial as one 30-minute session. What do the sessions have to include? A simple walk is good. Movement is the key. Move your body! It will love you for it.

While you're seated, do leg lifts, knee lifts, arm movements. See? You don't have to go to a gym or even go outside. You can do it right there in your own home. Stand beside your chair and with one hand on a chair, swing your leg in different directions. Then do the other side. You've probably got 10 minutes worth of exercises both sitting and standing right here. Go for it!



## **Meditation Corner**

*For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself.  
Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death.  
But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.  
– 1 Corinthians 1:8b-9*

Taking care of someone else can be challenging. Taking care of yourself in the process is often more difficult. No matter how much you love or think of the person you look after, it is no wonder that you can feel low at times.

Being together with God in prayer can be beneficial when you're downhearted. It brings you closer to your heavenly Father. Jesus gave His life so we have hope when all seems hopeless. In Psalm 42, the psalmist advises us to put our hope in God and to do it by praising Him.

*May the God of hope fill you with all JOY and peace as you trust in Him,  
so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. – Romans 15:1*

--Portions taken from *Blessings & Prayers for Caregivers*, Dellinger and Boerger, 2010, pp. 85-87.