

Caregiving and Ocular Melanoma

The support and tasks asked of a caregiver can sometimes feel overwhelming. There are several ways to manage these duties and help you cope.

Tips and Suggestions for Caregivers:

- Caregiving is a team effort. Call on family, friends, co-workers and other loved ones.
- Be proactive and plan ahead of time, especially if travel is involved. Create schedules to ensure that things will get done.
- Stay organized – create a binder with specific tabs relating to doctors, expenses, reports, travel, research, legal papers, etc.
- Keep a spreadsheet of all expenses and seek professional assistance to know what is deductible when filing your taxes.
- Know yourself – understand your limitations and how much you can handle.
- Stay positive – this can be difficult, so lean on others to share this role and expectation.
- Accompany your loved one to doctor visits and decide together how you will participate – asking questions, taking notes, providing the doctor with new information during the visit, etc.
- Ask for copies of reports, bloodwork, scans, etc. to keep for your records.
- Keep communication open between you and your loved one. This is key to making decisions.
- Let the patient lead – listen to their likes and dislikes, share your thoughts but respect their wishes in every care decision.
- Accept the limitations of both yourself and your loved one. Have patience.
- Be prepared for treatment side effects and use statements such as "Would you like to try lying down?" or "Do you think it might help if you had some water?" Allow your loved one to have space to make decisions instead of trying to "fix" it for him/her.
- Be reassuring, especially if your loved one becomes emotional. Statements like "I'm here, we can get through this together," "one thing at a time," "I'm here for you" show that you are there and supportive.
- Learn how to provide proper physical care if the need arises.
- Talk to a professional. There are support groups and individual counsellors available. Click these links for more information:
 - [Support Groups; Connect with Others](#)
 - [Emotional and Mental Wellness Resources](#)
 - [Find a Therapist in Your Area](#)
- Do the best you can, that is all that is needed.

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Ocumel Canada
1-800-460-5832
ocumelcanada.ca
ocumelcanada@saveyourskin.ca



All references can be found on the Melanoma Research Foundation website at www.melanoma.org