

Supporting the Support System: Resources for Colorectal Cancer Caregivers

This article summarizes information and services available specifically for those who provide care to colorectal cancer patients.

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When someone you care about is diagnosed with colorectal cancer (CRC), it impacts the entire family. Taking on the role of caregiver can greatly affect your physical, mental, and emotional health. That's why it's so important for caregivers to have access to support and resources. This article summarizes information and services available specifically for those who provide care to CRC patients.

Understanding Caregiver Burden

- Up to [90% of CRC patients](#) rely on at least one caregiver for assistance with medical care and daily activities.
- Common [challenges faced by caregivers](#) include disrupted sleep, poor diet, less exercise, and worsening health
- Major [sources of caregiver strain](#) include managing distressing symptoms, navigating complex healthcare, fulfilling practical duties, and processing difficult emotions
- Identifying [caregivers at high risk](#) for burden and providing support early on is crucial for their wellbeing and ability to continue caring for the patient

Types of Caregiver Support Resources

Numerous [resources have been developed](#) that can help caregivers make informed decisions. Here are example of some of these resources:

- Educational resources: Guides explaining [CRC](#), [treatment options](#), and [caregiving tips](#) can help caregivers feel informed and confident
- Individual counseling: One-on-one sessions allow caregivers to [discuss concerns and get coping strategies](#) tailored to their needs.
- Support groups: [Connecting with other caregivers](#) reduces isolation and provides mutual understanding and advice.
- Respite care: Adult day programs and in-home respite services give caregivers a break from daily responsibilities.
- Financial assistance: Organizations have [funds available to help](#) with costs like transportation, lodging, medications.

Self-Care Tips for Caregivers

- Ask family and friends for help with tasks like meals, errands, and household chores.
- Take breaks each day to engage in activities you enjoy, even if just for 10-15 minutes.
- Join an online or in-person support group to exchange advice and feel less alone.
- Don't neglect your own medical appointments and health screenings.
- Identify signs of burnout like irritability, sadness, fatigue and seek counseling if needed.

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