

Speak Up™ For Unpaid Caregivers



You may not know it, but you might be an unpaid caregiver. If you are caring for a spouse, parent, child, other relative, or for a friend or neighbor, you are an unpaid caregiver. Though many are caring for others out of love and compassion, most unpaid caregivers could really use some help. This Speak Up campaign provides ideas for strengthening your impact and getting some well-deserved support.

Examples of what unpaid caregivers do

- Help with eating, bathing, dressing, and toileting.
- Shop for groceries, clothing and other needs.
- Help pay bills, handle finances or provide financial assistance.
- Assist with household chores or maintenance.
- Drive or arrange transportation to and from doctor's visits.
- Help with medications, medical equipment or devices, or changing bandages.
- Monitor health conditions, such as diabetes.
- Help with mobility, such as getting in and out of a wheelchair.
- Accompany on visits to the doctor, hospital, lab or other medical testing facilities.

Tell doctors, nurses and other health professionals that you're an unpaid caregiver

- Ask for written information if you don't understand instructions.
- Speak up if you need training on how to use a medical device or equipment.
- Ask for the phone number of a health professional who can answer questions 24/7.
- Ask for a referral for a social worker or patient advocate.
- Ask for a recommendation for home health services to help with your loved one's needs.
- Find out if your loved one's insurance has any resources available to help.
- Ask if there is a caregiver's group that is available to you.

Take care of yourself first so you can care for others

- Take time for your regular doctor visits.
- Make an appointment with a counselor or therapist if you need to talk to someone.
- Identify family, friends, and others you can rely on when you need a break.



Resources are available for unpaid caregivers

- Your local Area Agency on Aging or community or senior center may have resources such as transportation to and from appointments or errands, and meal delivery services.
- Some medical centers provide transportation for doctor visits.
- See if your employer has an Employee Assistance Program. EAPs offer resources and services such as help finding childcare or adult day care and legal and financial advice.



The Joint Commission has collaborated with ARCHANGELS to develop the Care Badge, a unique program to create impact for unpaid caregivers across the nation by changing how they are seen, honored, and supported. Through the [Care Badge site](#) you can:

- Get your Caregiver Intensity Score to see how your role as a caregiver is impacting you and connect you with resources that can help.
- Get the Care Badge to let others know you are a caregiver and have skills that translate to opportunities at work and in your community.

As an advocate for patients and an unpaid caregiver, Speak Up and get the support you need.

The goal of Speak Up™ is to help patients and their advocates become active in their care.

Speak Up™ materials are intended for the public and have been put into a simplified (i.e., easy-to-read) format to reach a wider audience. They are not meant to be comprehensive statements of standards interpretation or other accreditation requirements, nor are they intended to represent evidence-based clinical practices or clinical practice guidelines. Thus, care should be exercised in using the content of Speak Up™ materials. Speak Up™ materials are available to all health care organizations; their use does not indicate that an organization is accredited by The Joint Commission.