

Being a caregiver is hard work. Everyday, there is a new obstacle to face and overcome. Here are five tips and considerations to be more effective to make your role a little easier.

Knowledge is power. Realize there are many opportunities for mistakes along the way: by you, your doctor, the pharmacy, the hospital, or the lab. We are all human. Being aware that you may not understand as well as you think you do, or that doctors make mistakes, can help you be the best caregiver you can be. Remember that knowledge is power. Avoid the temptation to bury your head in the sand!

Be involved. It is vital that you are fully engaged in the process. Don't just sit back and assume someone else will manage things for you. You must be the captain of the ship. Effective communication between the patient, caregiver and physician leads to better outcomes.

Be prepared and stay organized. Doctors are often rushed seeing numerous patients in time limited spots. Being organized is vital to an efficient visit. Have a folder to keep track of your questions, forms, medications, recommendations and test results. Always bring patient medical records with you, along with insurance or Medicare information.

Pay close attention to all medications. Medication is often a critical component of a treatment plan, yet so many struggles to follow medication regimens. Not following instructions, not completing a medicine or taking wrong dosage, can lead to adverse health effects and often, new problems for the patient and the caregiver. Talk to the pharmacist if you have questions, use pill organizers to create a system, and always carry a full list of medications the patient is currently taking.

Don't be afraid to ask for help. Stay connected with family and friends, as you continue your role as a caregiver. Think about your needs and [reach out to your community](#). Resist the urge to become isolated or think you can do this alone.

[CSCS](#) can help with any advice or needs that you may have. We provide disability support and provide a community for which people can thrive.