



Supporting someone  
with breathlessness



## Looking after your own health

It's incredibly important to look after yourself, especially when you're caring for someone else – you've probably been told this many times before. It's one of those things that sounds simple but can actually be quite hard to do.

Carers have told us that they often don't take time for themselves. Sometimes this is because they don't know how to care for themselves, feel like they simply don't have the time or are worried that the patient won't cope without them.

*Some carers worry that taking time for themselves can seem selfish, but we know that making sure you're rested and well will mean you are able to give the best possible care to the patient*

### What you can do to help the patient

Give yourself permission to look after yourself – you are allowed to care for your health too.

- **Being social and meeting other people** – local support groups are a great way for both you and the patient to have some social time meeting and connecting with others
- **Have a coffee or go for a walk outside** while the patient has their health appointments
- **Ask for help** – people want to help, so ask others to be with the patient from time to time so you can take time for yourself
- **Taking small snatches of time** for yourself can help – like even a 5 minute walk around the block or a **short relaxation exercise**. Visit [https://soundcloud.com/cuh\\_nhs/letting-go-relaxation-scripts](https://soundcloud.com/cuh_nhs/letting-go-relaxation-scripts)
- **Find out about carer benefits and allowances** – there may be some benefits and allowances you are entitled to as a carer of someone with breathlessness. See '**Accessing allowances and benefits for carers**' below for more information.

### Accessing allowances and benefits for carers

In the UK, there are several benefits and allowances that you may be entitled to as the carer of someone with breathlessness. By taking on the title of 'carer' and having a 'Carer's Needs Assessment' done by your local authority, you can find out what type of benefits, allowances and general support you may be entitled to. Carers UK has useful information about **which benefits you might be entitled to**. Visit <https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/help-with-benefits>



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## Have a look at our videos

There are two videos for this support topic over on the website that you may find useful:

- **'Giving yourself permission'** where carers talk about the importance of giving themselves permission to take time for themselves
- **'Looking after your own health'** to hear from a patient and from a former Community Matron and District Nurse, Sophie Howson, on why it's so important that carers look after their own health

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