

SPEAKING TO YOUR GP ABOUT BEING A CARER

Carers regularly look after, help or support someone who wouldn't be able to manage everyday life without their help. If you're not sure if you're a carer, consider whether you help with the following tasks:



personal care, such as washing and dressing



going to the toilet, or dealing with incontinence



eating or taking medicines



getting about at home or outside



practical help at home, keeping them company



emotional support or communicating

If you are undertaking a caring role, it is vital that you speak to your GP about being a carer – they may be able to offer additional support to help you look after yourself.

You must remember to look after your own health and consider your needs; this will enable you to look after the person you care for.

Speaking to your GP about caring can help if you feel you don't have time for your

own health, and could offer a useful resource for you to find more support in your community.

Make an appointment with your GP for an assessment of your health and your needs as a carer. This is separate from the assessment the person you care for may have, and is very much an appointment about you and helping you to maintain your health and look after yourself so that you can care effectively.

Help your GP may be able to offer you

- Visiting you or the person you care for at home, or offering preferential appointment times, if it is difficult for you to attend the surgery.
- Arranging appointments for both you and the person you care for at the same time.
- Referring you to NHS services, for example for support with continence or transport to hospitals.
- Supporting you to feel more informed about the medical conditions of the person you care for.

You may also be able to receive a free annual flu jab if you are the main carer.

If your GP is different from the GP of the person you care for, it is worth making both doctors aware of your role.

You may also want to request a carers' assessment from your local council. This looks at other aspects of your life, including your ability to carry on caring. More information on carers' assessments is available on the Care Choices website, www.carechoices.co.uk/care-information/services-for-carers