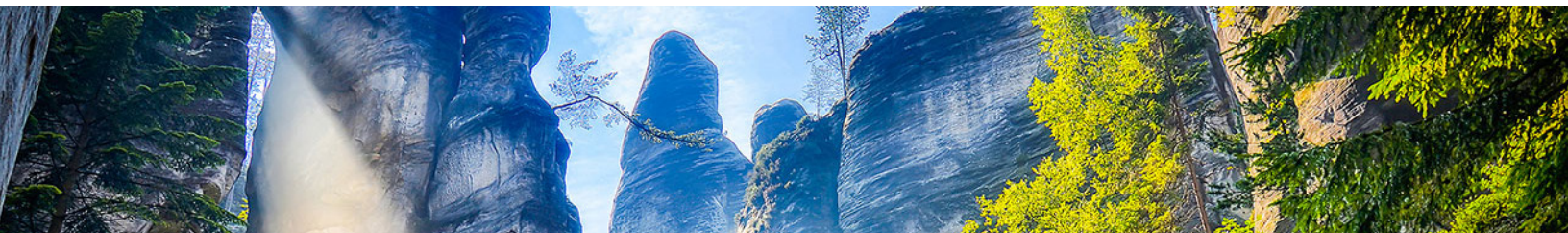


April 2024

The Empowered Care Partner



Together With You on Your Ceresti-Care Partner Journey



FEATURED ARTICLE

April Is Parkinson's Disease Awareness Month

Parkinson's disease is a progressive neurological disorder that affects movement, balance, and coordination. It is estimated that over 10 million people worldwide are living with the condition. At Ceresti, and around the U.S., April is Parkinson's Disease Awareness Month, an opportunity to raise awareness about and support those affected by this disease.

If you are a family caregiver for someone with Parkinson's disease, you know firsthand the challenges that come with the role. Caregiving can be a rewarding experience, but it can also be stressful and overwhelming. It's important to take care of yourself so that you can provide the best care possible for your loved one.

Here are some tips to help you support your loved one with Parkinson's disease:

- 1. Educate yourself about Parkinson's disease.** Ask your Ceresti coach for our full Parkinson's Disease educational program, available on your tablet. Learn as much as you can about the disease, its symptoms, and how it progresses. This will help you understand what your loved one is going through and how you can best support them.
- 2. Encourage your loved one to exercise.** Exercise is an important part of managing Parkinson's disease. It can help improve mobility, balance, and flexibility. Tai Chi is especially effective, in addition to a non-

contact sport developed especially for people with Parkinson's, called Rock Steady Boxing. Search for locations in your area that offer these services. As always, encourage your loved one to participate in activities they enjoy, such as walking, swimming, or dancing.

- 3. Create a safe environment.** Falls are a common problem for people with Parkinson's disease. Make sure your loved one's home is safe and free of hazards. Remove clutter, install grab bars in the bathroom, and ensure adequate lighting.
- 4. Be patient and understanding.** Parkinson's disease can be frustrating for both the person with the disease and their caregiver. Be patient and understanding with your loved one, and remember that they are doing the best they can.
- 5. Take care of yourself.** Caregiving can be stressful and overwhelming. Make sure you take care of yourself by eating well, getting enough sleep, and taking breaks when you need them. You can't take care of your loved one if you don't take care of yourself first.

In addition to these tips, there are many resources available to help you support your loved one with Parkinson's disease. The Michael J. Fox Foundation sponsors a [podcast](#) featuring scientists, doctors, and people with Parkinson's on different aspects of life with the disease as well as information on new and ongoing

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research. You can access the podcast at www.michaeljfox.org/podcasts. Also, reach out to a Parkinson's Disease support group in your area for additional support and information.

Parkinson's Disease Awareness Month is an opportunity to raise awareness about and support those affected by it. As a family caregiver, you play an important role in supporting your loved one with Parkinson's disease. By educating yourself about the disease, encouraging exercise, creating a safe environment, being patient and understanding, and taking care of yourself, you can provide the best care possible for your loved one.

As always, feel free to reach out to your Ceresti coaches whenever you need support. We're here to help!

By Marilyn Abrahamson - Brain-Health Education Specialist at Ceresti Health.

You can also find information about Parkinson's Disease, symptoms and risk factors on **Ceresti's Brain Health Education Portal**. Go to brainhealth.ceresti.com and explore. If you're visiting the portal for the first time, use the code **GIVECARE** to register.

CAREGIVER CORNER

SPRING: A BREATH OF FRESH AIR FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS

April is here, a time to appreciate the blossoms of spring and savor the outdoors. For family caregivers, the arrival of spring offers a golden opportunity to connect with nature and find moments of respite amid the caregiving journey.

As caregivers, it's easy to get caught up in the daily routines and demands, but taking a moment to step outside can have incredible benefits for both you and your loved one. Stop to embrace the moment and imagine a gentle breeze, and the scent of blooming flowers – these are the gifts that nature offers at this time of year.

Embrace this time to:

Allow Nature to Lower Your Stress: Spring is nature's therapy. A short walk in the park or even a few minutes in your backyard can significantly reduce stress and promote a sense of well-being. The greenery and the colors of spring have a calming effect, offering a brief escape from the challenges of caregiving.

- *Spend Quality Time Together:* If your loved one is mobile, consider planning outdoor activities. A picnic in a nearby park, a stroll through a botanical garden, or simply sitting on the porch can be delightful shared experiences. These moments strengthen the bond between caregiver and care recipient.
- *Get Outside and Garden - It's Good for the Soul:* Gardening is a therapeutic and rewarding activity. Whether you have a small balcony or a spacious backyard, tending to plants can bring joy and a sense of accomplishment. Choose easy-to-maintain flowers or herbs to start with, and involve your loved one if they have the interest and ability.
- *Become Involved in Seasonal Celebrations:* Embrace the festive spirit of spring by planning simple celebrations. A family barbecue, a picnic with extended family, or even a small gathering to enjoy the warmer weather can create lasting memories.

Caregiving is a journey, and taking time to appreciate the beauty of spring can be a source of strength and renewal. So, open the windows, feel the sunshine, and let the spirit of spring infuse your caregiving routine with a breath of fresh air.

Wishing you a joyful and rejuvenating spring season!

BITE-SIZED TIPS FOR A BETTER BRAIN

BOOST YOUR BRAIN WITH MOVEMENT

At Ceresti, we know that as a family caregiver, your role is both physically and mentally demanding. Caring for a loved one can be emotionally taxing, and the stress and responsibilities can take a toll on your own health.

One aspect of self-care that often gets overlooked is the importance of exercise for brain health. Physical activity is not just about keeping your body in shape; it's also a powerful tool to maintain and improve cognitive function. Let's explore the types of exercise that can benefit brain health, helping you stay mentally sharp while taking care of your loved one.

Aerobic Exercise

Aerobic exercises, also known as cardiovascular exercises (or, simply cardio), are excellent for enhancing brain health. Activities such as brisk walking, running, cycling, and swimming get your heart rate up and increase blood flow to the brain. This improved circulation ensures that your brain receives a rich supply of oxygen and nutrients, which are essential for optimal cognitive function. Regular aerobic exercise can also reduce the risk of age-related cognitive decline and conditions like dementia.

Strength Training

Strength training, which involves lifting weights or using resistance bands, is vital for maintaining and improving brain health. It not only helps build and tone muscles but also stimulates the release of growth factors that support the health of brain cells. Additionally, strength training can boost mood and reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, which can be particularly beneficial for family caregivers who often experience high levels of stress.

Yoga and Mindfulness

Yoga and mindfulness exercises combine physical movement with mental focus and relaxation. These practices can help family caregivers manage stress and improve their cognitive abilities. Yoga, in particular, has been shown to enhance memory and cognitive function while reducing the risk of developing age-related cognitive impairments. The mindfulness aspect of these activities can also aid in better stress management and emotional regulation.

Balance and Coordination Activities

Activities that challenge your balance and coordination, such as tai chi and Pilates, can benefit brain health by enhancing the connections between different parts of your brain. These exercises require mental concentration and physical coordination, which help keep your mind agile and sharp. Balance and coordination activities can also reduce the risk of falls, a common concern for family caregivers.

As a family caregiver, it's essential to remember that your well-being is just as crucial as the care you provide to your loved one. Regular exercise can significantly benefit your brain health, helping you stay mentally sharp and resilient. By incorporating a variety of exercise types, including aerobic, strength training, yoga, balance and coordination activities, brain-boosting games, and social engagement into your routine, you can better manage the challenges of caregiving while maintaining your cognitive abilities.

Don't forget to consult with a healthcare professional before starting a new exercise program, especially if you have any underlying medical conditions. Prioritizing your own health will ultimately enable you to provide better care and support to your loved one in the long run.

A Journey from the Comfort of Your Armchair

Taking care of a loved one is a rewarding yet demanding role, and it's important to remember that taking care of yourself is just as important. Let's explore a fun (and more accessible) way to practice self-care without leaving the comfort of your home. Let's call it armchair travel.

Life as a caregiver can often leave little time for relaxation or personal adventure. However, finding moments to recharge and rejuvenate is important for your well-being. *Armchair travel* is a fantastic way to embark on a mental vacation, transporting yourself to far-off places without stepping outside.

Picture this: You, nestled in your favorite chair, a cozy blanket draped over your shoulders, and a captivating book that whisks you away to exotic destinations. Armchair travel is all about immersing yourself in the sights, sounds, and stories of different cultures from the comfort of your living room.

One of the simplest ways to begin your armchair travel adventure is through books. Explore novels set in foreign lands, allowing your imagination to roam freely. Feel the bustling markets of Marrakech, the serene beaches of Bali, or the historic streets of Rome. The power of words can transport you to places you may not physically visit but can certainly experience in your mind.

If reading isn't your preference, consider documentaries or travel shows. With today's technology, you can virtually explore the wonders of the world through the lens of your favorite travel hosts. Dive into the vibrant colors of the Amazon rainforest or witness the breathtaking landscapes of the Himalayas—all from the comfort of your armchair.

You can watch YouTube videos that will take you on a virtual tour of countries around the world specific to your search. You may virtually visit [Portugal, Spain, and Morocco](#), or the [Seychelles Islands](#) simply by going to YouTube and typing the locale of your choice into the search bar at the top of the page.

For a more interactive experience, try virtual reality (VR) apps that simulate real-world locations. With just a headset, you can find yourself strolling through picturesque gardens or standing atop majestic mountains. It's a fantastic way to escape reality momentarily and unwind.

Remember, self-care isn't a luxury—it's a necessity. Armchair travel provides an accessible and enjoyable avenue for caregivers to take a mental break, fostering a sense of well-being and balance in your busy life.

So, whether you dream of sipping tea in a Japanese garden or exploring the historical wonders of Egypt, let armchair travel be your passport to relaxation. Take a moment for yourself, embark on a virtual journey, and let the magic of self-care unfold in the comfort of your own home.

