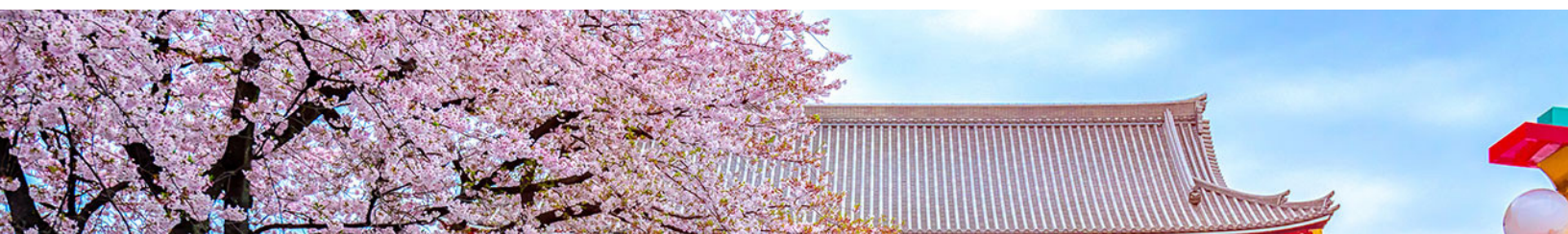


February 2025



The Empowered Caregiver

Together With You on Your Ceresti-Care Partner Journey



FEATURED ARTICLE

Why American Heart Month Matters for Family Caregivers

February is *American Heart Month*, a perfect time to focus on heart health. As a Ceresti family caregiver, you juggle many responsibilities, but it's important not to overlook your own well-being and the heart health of your loved one. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, but the good news is that it's often preventable with simple lifestyle changes.

Here's how you can take steps to care for all the hearts under your roof.

1. Know the Signs of Heart Trouble

Heart problems don't always announce themselves dramatically. They can start with milder symptoms like fatigue, shortness of breath, dizziness, or pain in the neck, jaw, or back. Keep an eye on changes in your or your loved one's health, and don't hesitate to call a doctor if something feels off.

2. Focus on Healthy Eating

Food choices can have a significant impact. Try incorporating heart-healthy foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. Cut back on salt, sugar, and saturated fats, which can raise blood pressure and cholesterol. If cooking healthy meals feels like a challenge, start small by replacing one snack a day with something nutritious, like a handful of nuts or a piece of fruit.

3. Get Moving

Exercise doesn't have to mean running marathons. Even moderate activities, like walking, gardening, or dancing, can improve heart health. Aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week. If your loved one is mobile, join in together—it's a great way to bond while staying active.

FEATURED ARTICLE

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4. Keep Stress in Check

Caregiving can be stressful, and chronic stress takes a toll on the heart. Finding ways to relax, even for a few minutes, can make a difference. Deep breathing, meditation, or a quick walk around the block can help calm your mind. Don't be afraid to ask for help—sharing the load can lighten the stress.

5. Regular Check-Ups Save Lives

Encourage your loved one (and yourself!) to schedule routine doctor visits. Regular screenings for blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar can catch potential problems early. Staying on top of these numbers is one of the best ways to prevent serious heart issues.

Care for Yourself, Too

As a caregiver, you may focus all your energy on your loved one, but remember that your health matters, too. You can't pour from an empty cup. This February, take a moment to check in with your own heart health. You'll be setting a powerful example and ensuring you're there for your loved one in the long run.

American Heart Month is a great reminder that small changes can make a big difference. Let's keep those hearts beating strong—together!

By Marilyn Abrahamson, Brain Health Education Specialist at Ceresti Health

FAST FACTS FOR CAREGIVERS

HYDRATION TIPS

Staying hydrated is essential for both caregivers and the loved ones they care for. Here are a few quick tips:

- 1. Start the Day Right:** Begin each morning with a glass of water to kickstart hydration.
- 2. Flavor It Up:** Add lemon, cucumber, or berries to water for a refreshing twist.
- 3. Set Reminders:** Use phone alarms or apps to prompt regular sips throughout the day.
- 4. Snack Smart:** Incorporate water-rich foods like cucumbers, watermelon, or oranges into meals and snacks.
- 5. Keep it Visible:** Always have a water bottle nearby as a visual reminder.

A hydrated body helps maintain focus, energy, and overall health—key for caregiving success!

To learn more about Alzheimer's Disease and other brain-health-related information, visit **Ceresti's Brain Health Education Portal** at brainhealth.ceresti.com. If this is your first time, use the code **GIVECARE** to register.

Meet Molly



Hello! My name is Molly Fuhrman-Sherman, and I officially joined the Ceresti team at the end of October 2024. I feel incredibly fortunate to be part of such an amazing company and couldn't have imagined a better role or team to call home.

I'm originally from Roswell, New Mexico (yes, the alien capital!). I earned my Bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of New Mexico. During college, I became the primary caregiver for my grandmother, who had early-onset dementia. That experience deeply inspired me to support other patients and their families. I started as a music volunteer at a local memory care facility, eventually becoming an Activity Coordinator and then a Memory Care Director. My passion has always been to enhance the quality of life for residents through meaningful activities and social engagement while actively supporting and involving their families.

I now live in a small town in Michigan with my husband, Chris, our 9-year-old bonus daughter, Kaya, and a delightful herd of animals. We have a homestead with flourishing vegetable and wildflower gardens. Recently, our family grew even more with the arrival of our baby girl, Marlena June, born on September 30th.

Joining Ceresti has been a dream come true. This role allows me to work from home with my beautiful baby while pursuing work I am deeply passionate about. I often think about how much a program like this would have helped when I was caring for my grandmother. Now, I am excited to provide that support to caregivers—whether through listening, offering encouragement, sharing guidance, or simply being there with understanding.

I'm thrilled to be part of the Ceresti family and can't wait to make a difference!

RECOGNIZING CHANGE

SIGNS OF COGNITIVE DECLINE: WHEN MEMORY LOSS BECOMES CONCERNING

As a caregiver, it can be hard to tell if memory loss in a loved one is just a normal part of aging or something more serious. Forgetting little things, like where they put their keys, is common, but certain signs might mean there's a bigger problem.

One of the first signs to watch for is frequent memory loss. If your loved one keeps forgetting new information or asks the same questions over and over, it might be more than just a slip of the mind.

Another clue is trouble with planning or solving problems. Tasks that used to be simple, like following a recipe or balancing a checkbook, might now feel too hard or confusing.

Getting mixed up about time or place is also a concern. Your loved one might lose track of the date, forget what season it is, or get confused in a familiar area.

Having trouble with everyday tasks is another sign. For example, they might forget how to drive to a place they've been to many times or how to use household appliances they've always used.

Lastly, pulling away from social activities can also be a warning. If your loved one starts skipping family events or loses interest in hobbies they used to love, it could be because of changes in their memory or thinking.

If you notice any of these signs, it's a good idea to talk to a doctor. Catching problems early can make a big difference and help your loved one live a better life. Paying attention to these changes and getting help can go a long way in providing the care they need.

BITE-SIZED TIPS FOR A BETTER BRAIN

The Power of Mini Breaks: Boosting Brain Health for Caregivers

As a family caregiver, your days are often packed with non-stop tasks, but taking short, regular breaks can have a powerful impact on your brain health. These mini breaks, lasting just a few minutes, help your brain reset, improve focus, and reduce stress.

Studies show that working too long without a pause leads to cognitive fatigue, causing performance to drop. By stepping away for even 5-10 minutes, whether through a walk, stretching, or deep breathing, you give your brain a chance to recharge. This boost in energy and clarity makes it easier to stay sharp and handle caregiving duties.

Mini breaks also help reduce stress. Caregiving can be overwhelming, and regular pauses lower cortisol, the stress hormone, preventing burnout. By taking short breaks, you lower anxiety and tension, making it easier to stay calm and focused.

To incorporate mini breaks into your day, set a timer as a reminder to take a quick pause. This small act can have big benefits, helping you stay refreshed and better able to care for both yourself and your loved one.