

## THE SANDWICH GENERATION: Who is Caring for You?

by Ruth Taratine, DNP, RN, CCRN-K

Self-care is typically neglected by the sandwich generation. Learning to integrate simple self-care tips into your daily routine will help caregivers to stay healthy. The healthy caregiver provides a higher level of physical and emotional care to their loved one and this is a gift that keeps on giving.



### 1. Be kind to yourself

One of the first things to learn is to ask for and accept help. It's important to clearly identify your needs and acknowledge that you can't do it all alone. This can be hard to do. Make a list of people you know who would be willing to help. Help doesn't necessarily mean caregiving, but every task or chore that is removed from your full plate will give you a few more minutes of you time every day!

### 2. Take spontaneous and unplanned breaks

A walk to the mailbox can be a mini-vacation. Sun, and even rain, can be good for the soul. Exercise of any kind can help to release some of the frustration that caregivers experience.

### 3. Pack a caregiver bag of your own

Find an attractive cloth bag for essential personal items when you visit the hospital with your loved one. Keep hand lotion, lip balm, a journal, a novel, or any item that is soothing for you.

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I am a member of the 'sandwich' generation, that group that must simultaneously care for elderly parents and support children

- Sandra Tsing Loh

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## Caregiving Book Recommendation for the Sandwich Generation

*Stuck in the Middle*

by  
Barbara McVicker &  
Darby McVicker Puglielli

Real life stories, guides, and tips, based on interviews with hundreds of caregivers and health care professionals as well as the author's own sandwich generation caregiving experience. One reviewer said, "The real life stories made me feel... not so alone."

#### 4. Be mindful and meditative

When caring for your loved one, be mindful of how he or she feels, smells, talks, laughs, etc. Appreciate the beauty of it all. The memories you make in doing so can be conjured up at a moment's notice... forever. Seize the opportunity to be present in the moment. Refuse to let stress or anger rob you of valuable time.

#### 5. Nourish your body with healthy food

It is all too easy to rely on junk food and vending machines. Avoid using alcohol or drugs (including caffeine) to get through the day. Eating healthy food will give you the physical and mental stamina to deal with whatever is thrown your way during the day. Ultimately, it will help you to deal with adversity more effectively.

#### 6. Sleep whenever you can

Many of us struggle with sleep even without a life crisis. If you have an unexpected two-hour break in the middle of an afternoon, take a nap and refuse to feel guilty about it. Sleep, like healthy food, helps all of us handle adversity better.

#### 7. Laugh, laugh, laugh

We all know the power of a good belly laugh! Try to see the humor in life.

#### 8. Avoid hard and fast plans

Purchasing tickets for concerts or signing up to take a class and then being unable to attend can add to your frustration. You are often better off using any free time to take a walk, shop, or even nap. Time becomes ever so precious. Learn to use it wisely.

#### 9. Consider counseling

Many counselors specialize in anger, the stress of caregiving, and grief. If you need help in getting through a stressful time in life, you are not weak or unusual. Think about what you need or want. Do you just want to talk to someone? Maybe a therapist or support group is what you need.



#### Did You Know?

A Pew Research Center study found almost half of all adults in their 40s and 50s have at least one parent age 65 or older, while also raising a young child or helping to financially support a child age 18 or older.

## Turkey and Spring Onion Wraps

by  
BBC GoodFood



#### Ingredients:

2 tbsp reduced-fat mayonnaise  
2 tbsp pesto  
4 curly lettuce leaves  
250g cooked turkey, shredded  
6 spring onions, shredded  
12cm chunk cucumber, shredded  
4 flour tortillas

#### Directions:

Mix together the mayonnaise and pesto.  
Divide the lettuce leaves, turkey, spring onions and cucumber between the tortillas.  
Drizzle over the pesto dressing, roll up and eat.

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For more information or advice, contact eni online at:

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