

H48 Caregiver Stress

To air week of November 26, 2007

Intro: If your child, spouse or parent got sick and you became their care giver, would you be prepared for the task? No matter how much you love someone, becoming their caregiver can be very stressful. And people under chronic stress are at risk of depression and other illnesses. More from Mayo Clinic on a program geared at managing caregiver stress.

Video

Total running time 1:44

Jim Judge

Caregiver

Jim Judge

Caregiver

Audio

CARLITA JUDGE HAS HAD
PARKINSON'S DISEASE FOR 20
YEARS. HER HUSBAND JIM HAS
BEEN BY HER SIDE AS PRIMARY
CAREGIVER THE ENTIRE TIME.
"TO ME SHE'S STILL THE
BEAUTIFUL GIRL I MARRIED 44
YEARS AGO."
BUT THEIR JOURNEY HASN'T BEEN
EASY.
"QUITE HONESTLY IT'S 24-7. I CAN
NEVER REALLY RELAX BECAUSE
CARLITA MIGHT NEED ME."
THE CONSTANT DEMANDS OF
HELPING CARLITA WITH BASIC

TASKS SUCH AS STANDING,
WALKING, DRESSING AND EVEN
CUTTING FOOD CAN BE VERY
STRESSFUL FOR BOTH OF THEM.
BUT IT'S PARTICULARLY
STRESSFUL FOR JIM. FOR THE
CAREGIVER. DR. JENNIFER BORTZ
SAYS UNTREATED STRESS TAKES
ITS TOLL ON YOUR MIND AND
YOUR BODY.

Jennifer Bortz, Ph.D.
Mayo Clinic Psychologist

Stressed Linked To:

- **Cardiovascular disease**
- **Stroke**
- **Cancer**
- **Aging**
- **Depression**

“STRESS IS LINKED TO SIX OF THE
MAJOR CAUSES OF MORTALITY.”
INCLUDING CARDIOVASCULAR
DISEASE, STROKE, CANCER,
CELLULAR AGING AND
DEPRESSION. YOU SEE, STRESS
WEAKENS YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM.
AND CAREGIVERS OFTEN DON'T
TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES
BECAUSE THEY PUT THE NEEDS
OF THEIR LOVED ONES FIRST. SO
TO BETTER UNDERSTAND HOW
CAREGIVER STRESS AFFECTS THE

BODY AND TO HELP CAREGIVERS
COPE, RESEARCHERS AT MAYO
CLINIC ARE STUDYING THE
EFFECTS OF A STRESS
EDUCATION PROGRAM ON
BIOLOGICAL AGING.

Jennifer Bortz, Ph.D.
Mayo Clinic psychologist

“THE PROGRAM ITSELF IS
REFERRED TO AS MINDFULNESS
BASED STRESS REDUCTION.”
IT TEACHES MEDITATION -- HOW
TO STAY FOCUSED ON THE
PRESENT NOT ON WHAT MAY
HAVE HAPPENED IN THE PAST OR
COULD HAPPEN IN THE FUTURE.
THE PROGRAM ALSO EMPHASIZES
TIME AWAY FROM CARE GIVING
AND THE BENEFITS OF JOINING A
SUPPORT GROUP. JIM AND
CARLITA KNOW THAT CARE GIVING
IS STRESSFUL. BUT MANAGING
THAT STRESS MAKES THEIR
JOURNEY EASIER. FOR MEDICAL
EDGE, I'M VIVIEN WILLIAMS.

Standup
Vivien Williams
Reporting

Anchor tag:

Jim is participating in a Mayo study led by Dr. Bortz, to help doctors understand the relationship between stress of care giving and biological aging. For more information on care giving, visit our Website at...**[STATIONS: Per the licensing agreement, please provide a link from your station's website to <http://www.mayoclinic.org> or voice tag "mayoclinic.org" for more information.]**