

Tip Sheet # 29



Finding the Best Way to Ask Family and Friends for Help

What about asking my family and friends for help?

- Admitting you need help can be difficult. Don't expect yourself to do everything on your own.
- Asking for their help is a sign of your strength.
- Asking for help is one way to take control of your situation.
- Caring for a stroke survivor affects all family members and friends.
- Your family and friends want to know what they can do. They need your help to figure it out.

How can I as a caregiver ask more effectively for help?

- Make a list of the things you need help with.
- Be specific about your needs.
 - Do you need help with shopping or getting meals fixed?
 - Do you need some time away by yourself?
 - Do you need your house cleaned? Or maybe just the kitchen? What about the yard or the car?
- Make a list of anyone who could be available to help.
- Have a family meeting to talk about help.
- Encourage family members and friends to be open and honest with you about what they are able to do.
 - How much time do they have to share with you?
 - What kinds of things do they feel comfortable doing?

Prepare ahead of time how you would ask family and friends for help. The following worksheet can help you organize your thoughts.



Family and Friends who I can ask for help:	What can I ask them to do? (Write this in the form of a question you would ask them)	When is a good time to have them do___?
Name: Phone:		Date: Time:
Name: Phone:		Date: Time:
Name: Phone:		Date: Time:
Name: Phone:		Date: Time:
Name: Phone:		Date: Time:

Sample questions you might ask: (Put an X beside the ones you like).

___ “Would you be willing to come over and keep an eye on ___ while I go out for awhile?” “I can show you what to do ahead of time and I’ll have my cell phone on me if you have questions.”

___ “I would love it if you could come over and help me with ___.”

___ “I need help with the yard. Could you and the kids come over?”

___ “Could you stop by the grocery and pick up some ___ for me?”

___ “I could use some help with ___.”

___ “Could you by chance come with us to our next doctor appointment?”

___ Other _____

___ Other _____

Thinking about and framing your questions ahead of time will make you feel more comfortable in asking family or friends to help. Be very specific about what you need. Set a day and time for the task that you are asking family and friends to do. Get it on their calendar and on yours.



When do I as a caregiver need to contact a professional about asking for help?

- It is never too early to ask about what kind of help your survivor will need at home.
- Talk with your doctor, nurse, social worker, or counselor if you are feeling overwhelmed.
- Ask before you need help, if possible.
- Talk with a social worker at a rehabilitation center about help available in your community.
- See **Tip Sheet #8 Where to find resources** for all kinds of places where you may find help.

Where can I find more information?

- If asking for help is hard, or if you are feeling overwhelmed, talk with a counselor, therapist, or clergy member.
- Call your doctor or nurse
- Call the American Stroke Association's Toll-Free Warmline: 1-800-478-7653
- Log onto the American Stroke Association's Website: www.StrokeAssociation.org
- Check out the following tip sheets about asking doctors and professionals for information and advice:
 - **Tip Sheet #7 Who to call for Advice**
 - **Skill-Building Tip Sheet #SB5. Communicating with Health Professionals**
 - **Skill-Building Tip Sheet #SB3. Maintaining realistic schedule and expectations.**

