

Having a Partner with CF

Having a partner with CF will no doubt have a big impact on your life. There will be many things that a couple with CF may face that others will not; health changes, financial impacts, effects on social life, medications, treatments and more. On the other hand, many couples dealing with CF report a greater appreciation for life and a stronger relationship because of these struggles.

Having a partner with CF means you probably take on some level of being a caregiver. The role you play is likely to change over time and throughout your relationship, depending on your partner's health.

It may include anything ranging from assisting with medications, going to clinic appointments, helping with cleaning nebs and other devices, encouraging them to do their treatments and maintain a routine, helping with day-to-day life if they are experiencing low lung function as well as being a strong support system.

Although taking on a caregiver role is likely done from a place of love and care for your partner, it can take a toll on your health if you aren't taking the time to look after yourself as well.

Taking Care of You

As a caregiver, your role is to make sure that your loved one who has CF is healthy, supported, and cared for. But who cares for you?



It is vital for your emotional health and wellbeing that you have time to look after your own physical and emotional health to avoid caregiver burnout.

Warning signs of burnout include:

- Withdrawal from friends, family, and other loved ones.
- Loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed.
- Feeling blue, irritable, hopeless, and helpless.
- Changes in appetite, weight, or both.
- Changes in sleep patterns.
- Getting sick more often.
- Emotional and physical exhaustion.

Self-Care

Ways that you can seek help and take care of your own health include:

- Accept support from family, friends

and support organisations.

- Make connections with other carers who understand what you're going through.
- Take time for yourself e.g. exercise, hobbies, friends.
- Practice positive thinking.
- Stay connected with support systems.
- Eat well.
- Get plenty of sleep.

Seeking Support

- [Mental Health Support](#)- If you are struggling and need support, our psychosocial team can help. We offer counselling and can assist in accessing further help when necessary. If you would like to access support from a psychologist or counsellor, it is important to see your GP and get a Mental Health Treatment Plan first, which will enable you to access government rebates. We also have [Mental Health Gap Funding for carers](#).
- [Peer Support Events](#)- designed to help carers meet and develop ongoing support networks.
- [Resources and Information](#)- to learn more about different aspects of CF.
- [Financial Support](#)- We offer subsidies for hospital travel/parking, pharmaceutical, exercise/equipment and mental health gap funding to ease the financial burden on your family.
- [Transplant Support](#)- if your partner is pre or post-transplant, we can offer extra support in the home.
- [Community Support Worker \(CSW\) Program](#)- Encourage your partner to access our CSW program to give you a break. Our CSW can also provide a lot of support to you.

You can also receive support from [Carers WA](#) who offer various services to carers.

Useful Resources

- [Parents and Other Carers Webpage](#) (CFWA)
- [Partner Interviews](#) (CFWA)
- [Taking Care of Yourself When Your Partner has CF](#) (CF Foundation)
- [Living with CF: A Partner's Perspective](#) (CF Ireland)
- [An Interview with my CF Caregiver Husband](#) (cysticfibrosis.com)

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www.cfwa.org.au

Cystic Fibrosis WA
The Niche
11 Aberdare Road
Nedlands WA 6009

T: 08 6224 4100
E: info@cfwa.org.au

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