

WHAT IS *Caregiver Distress?*

You've heard plenty about caregiver stress.
But what is caregiver distress?

People like to talk about caregiver stress, but that's not the best way to describe the condition, said University of Washington Professor Dr. Peter Vitaliano. "It's the caregiver stressors that lead to the real problem of caregiver distress," he noted.

"Stressors include too many caregiver demands, not enough help caring for a loved one, feeling alone, financial problems and work loss. These all can lead to caregiver distress and burden. Also, these stressors can influence poor diet, lack of exercise and poor sleep patterns which, in turn, can increase the risk for several bodily changes that may impact long-term health, such as cognitive problems in caregivers."

Research conducted by Dr. Vitaliano and other scientists reveals that caregiver distress can manifest itself by increasing the risks for:

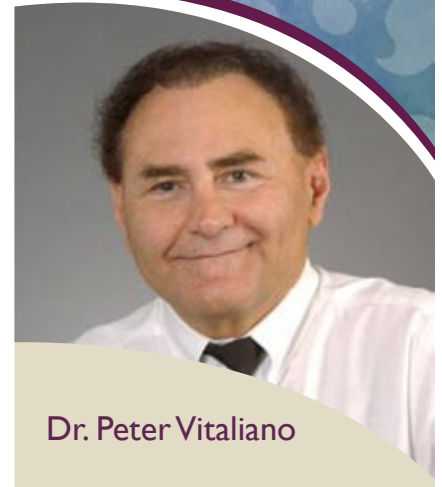
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Compromised Immune System
- Chronic fatigue
- Ulcers
- Heart problems
- Increased risk of stroke
- Slow-wound healing
- Insomnia
- Anger
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Adrenal exhaustion
- Increased susceptibility to infection
- Stomach complaints
- Weight gain/loss and obesity
- Mental fatigue
- Cognitive problems

Caregiver distress can spill over into other areas of life, potentially creating relationship problems, exacerbating addictions and causing job issues.

Completing the Family Caregiver Distress Assessment at FamilyCaregiverStressRelief.com can help family caregivers determine if caregiver stressors are causing distress and increasing the potential risk for long-term health problems.

In addition, the American Academy of Family Physicians and the National Center on Caregiving recommend that caregivers be screened for stress and depression. Caregivers who feel that their caregiving is impacting their health in any way are encouraged to consult with a health care provider.

For other resources, visit **CaregiverStress.com**[®] and check out the tools of the Family Caregiver Stress ReliefSM program at **FamilyCaregiverStressRelief.com**.



Dr. Peter Vitaliano