Why do Family Caregivers Need Respite?

Being a family caregiver, while fulfilling a role, can consume a great deal of physical, mental and emotional energy. Consequently, respite care is very important because it gives family caregivers of persons with ALS an opportunity to create a plan of care for them, something a caregiver frequently overlooks.

Respite care simply means an interval of rest or relief. Respite care gives the family caregiver an opportunity to take a much-needed break from the daily care that they provide for a loved one. A period of respite may be a few hours or a few days at a time depending on what is worked out with the Care Connection Team. Below are a number of ways caregivers can spend their “time off” during their respite. They can:

- Go to a movie
- Read a book at a nearby park
- Go on a short vacation
- Attend a caregivers’ Support Group
- Retreat to another part of the house and watch TV, read a book or take a nap
- Sit in the sun
- Take a walk
- Treat themselves to lunch at a restaurant with a friend
- Get a massage, a facial, a manicure or a pedicure

Whatever it may be, have the caregiver do something they enjoy that’s JUST FOR THEM!!

It is important that caregivers have a plan for their own self-care because doing so can enhance the quality of life for them and the quality of life for their loved one. The more relaxed and fulfilled they feel, the more easily they will be able to provide the necessary care to their loved one. It is also possible that the loved one will appreciate a respite from the normal routine of care as well!

“We are most effective as caregivers when we are centered in our own sense of well-being.”
Caryn Summers, R.N.