

Helping others help you

Chances are you don't think twice about lending a helping hand. Asking for help? That's not so easy.

Asking family and friends for help if you have a serious health problem — like heart disease or cancer — benefits both you and them. Very likely, friends and family who care about you want to help out. They may not know how.

To help you, your friends and family can:

- Take you to and from medical appointments
- Remind you to take your medicine if you sometimes forget
- Help you think of questions for your doctor
- Stay with you at doctor's visits to help keep track of what's said
- Lend a hand with chores when you don't have much energy

Emotional support is important too. If you need someone to talk to, be sure to

reach out. Sometimes a shoulder to lean on is the best medicine of all.

One last idea: When eating well or getting more exercise is important for your health, invite others to join you. Perhaps a friend could join you for daily walks. Or your whole family could help fix — and enjoy — healthy meals. It's a win for everyone.

Source: *National Institutes of Health* (www.nih.gov)



Need help? A care manager can tell you more about depression and help you connect with your provider. Call Member Services and ask for the Care Management Department.

Alternative therapies and depression

Alternative therapies or medicines are not usually prescribed by your doctor. They're usually products that you buy over the counter. You can often buy them at a health food store. Are you thinking about trying an alternative medicine (for example, herbs, supplements or other natural products) for your depression?

Many people seek help from herbs, supplements and

other "natural" products to feel better.

Before you try something new:

- Find out if the product is safe.
- Talk it over with your doctor or other health care provider.

Just because something is labeled *natural* doesn't mean it's safe.

For example, an herb called St. John's Wort was thought to help

depression. However, studies found that it didn't mix safely with other medicines.

The National Institutes of Health at www.nccih.nih.gov is a good site for checking a product's safety.

Make an appointment with your doctor or other provider (such as a counselor or specialist) and let him or her know what product you'd like to try and why.

Be honest if you think your current medicine isn't working. Your doctor might suggest trying a different medicine.

Your doctor can advise you on the benefits and risks of using the alternative therapy. Then you can make an informed decision.

Source: *National Institutes of Health* (www.nih.gov)