

The Sandwich Generation: Striking the right balance in life

Melissa is 54 years old, has a daughter in college and a son who just moved back home because he cannot find a job. At the same time, she is helping her 80-year-old dad transition to an assisted living facility. She runs errands several times a week for him since he no longer drives and takes him to weekly church services and medical appointments.

Melissa stays constantly on the run taking care of everyone but herself. She is a member of "the sandwich generation."

The name sounds like something you would see as a Food Network cooking show, but it's actually a term that has been coined for adults who are sandwiched between two generations. These people often are raising their own children or providing support for young adult children while caring for an aging parent. They are frequently squeezed between the demands of caring for each.

It's a situation that has become more common due to women having children later in life and older adults living longer. In fact, it is estimated that about 16 million Americans are caught in the sandwich generation. As adults live longer, they often need more assistance with daily living

activities and that often falls to their children. It's a role reversal that is expected to explode over the next 25 years.

"We find that these individuals are caring for aging parents and children, struggling with finding time to care for themselves," noted Mark Sakr, DO, a family practitioner with Carolina Family Practice & Sports Medicine. "They are torn between taking time out of their schedule for themselves and their welfare. Between doctor appointments, school, sports, social activities and their own jobs, people have less time. Even the most basic principles of healthy living are getting phased out because patients feel guilty about taking the time out of their day to care for themselves."

Eric Morse, MD, with Carolina Performance agrees. "In some cases, I have actually written a prescription for a patient to keep with them that prescribes going to the gym three times a week for one hour. They can pull it out and show how important it is to their spouse, children or parent. This carved out time needs to be just for that 'caregiver' or they will eventually burn out."

Dr. Sakr notes that he advises patients to make healthy living as a structured part of their day. "Ask anyone about their health goals and the common answers tend to be eat better and exercise more, but how many of us make them a scheduled part of our day similar to our meetings or errands?"

What can you do if you find yourself among this growing trend?

Here are some tips on how to be supportive of your loved ones while maintaining your health.

What's Inside

- Memory loss and aging
- Hyperbaric oxygen therapy and autism
- Upcoming events



See inside for a healthy recipe

Learn to set boundaries. It is OK to let your children or parents know that you are carving out dedicated time for them. In some cases, the child may be in college or living elsewhere. The parent may reside in another town, but need support. How often do you talk to them on the phone or drive to visit? Develop

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Provider Spotlight



WAKE
RADIOLOGY

Have you just injured your ankle? Do you need to stop by on your way home from work to have your annual screening mammogram? Has your physician ordered an advanced MRI of your hip? Whether you need to get a quick x-ray or have a more specialized study, Wake Radiology's office at the American Institute of Healthcare & Fitness (AIHF) can accommodate your imaging needs.

Wake Radiology was one of the first providers to open on the AIHF campus in 2007. The practice moved their Northwest Raleigh office to the new campus, noting the convenient location and relaxed atmosphere as primary reasons for relocating to AIHF. This office offers not only general radiology, but can also perform ultrasounds, MRIs and women's imaging, including digital screening mammography and bone densitometry.

As one of the oldest practices in the region, Wake Radiology is also one of the most respected in part for its high practice standards and staff expertise. All of their more than 50 radiologists are board-certified by the American Board of Radiology and

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fellowship-trained in a wide range of subspecialties. The practice invests in proven, advanced technologies so that they offer leading-edge imaging studies to detect, diagnose and stage disease. They strive to provide inviting and welcoming outpatient offices that are located nearby where people live and work. Their office at AIHF is a stellar example of their commitment to excellence.

This location, along with other Wake Radiology outpatient sites that offer women's imaging, has been recognized by national accrediting organizations as the best in the industry. They are the only multi-site freestanding provider in the Triangle to earn the American College of Radiology's prestigious Breast Imaging Center of Excellence (BICOE) designation and first in the nation to be certified by the International Society for Clinical Densitometry (ISCD) for bone density studies.

"We are especially on the forefront of patient safety," noted Margaret King, chief operating officer at Wake Radiology. "We employ low-dose radiation protocols to ensure that patients are getting the best exam possible with the least amount of radiation exposure. Our goal is to provide patients with an individualized exam that will supply optimal information to their physician. Each patient who comes to our imaging center has concerns about radiation risk and is often apprehensive about the results, so we work extremely hard to make sure that they are comfortable and reassured throughout their exam."

www.wakerad.com
919-676-7575

Recipe Corner

It is strawberry season, a time to get creative with fresh, locally grown berries that are high in nutritional value, but low in calories!

Fresh Strawberry Salad

Recipe compliments of Patti's Café and Healthy Diets

(1 serving)

1 cup romaine lettuce

1 cup diced tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, bell peppers

1 cup sliced strawberries

2 tsp thyme

1 tsp dried mint

1 Tbsp sesame seeds

Top with homemade dressing:

1 Tbsp olive oil

1 Tbsp lemon juice

1/8 tsp garlic salt

Black pepper to taste

Nutrition Facts: Calories: 292, Total Fat: 21g,
Carbohydrates: 26g, Protein: 5g, Sodium: 250mg



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a schedule and let them know that "this is our time to talk and make plans about your care."

Schedule personal time for yourself.

Even though you want to take care of your loved ones, you have to take care of yourself first! That means eating right and exercising, making sure that you're getting adequate sleep and taking time to relax. Don't feel guilty if you take a vacation. Give yourself permission to join a gym or get a regular massage. Meet a friend for coffee or a relaxing lunch once a week.

Delegate and ask for help. Give yourself time off and enlist others – family members, friends, professionals – to help locate resources and information. It often helps to get a fresh perspective on what assistance is available to help an aging parent. Remember if you get too immersed in the care of others, you can become ill, injured, fatigued or depressed.

Let go of the guilt. Don't let your children or parents make you feel guilty for taking personal time or a break. Discuss expectations with them and come to agreement on what is realistic.

Talk to a mental health professional or trusted family doctor. It is beneficial to talk to a neutral party to assess the family dynamics. Schedule time with a counselor to help you resolve underlying issues and to help you develop coping strategies. "We see many multi-generational families and they enjoy that we have a strong understanding of their family and the social dynamics at play," continued Dr. Sakr. "No one's health is isolated and that is helpful in using all the information possible to make decisions that are tailored to each person's health needs. All of this is done with confidentiality, but more often than not, the office visits turn into a family affair."

Source: Information for this article was based on recommendations from Carolina Family Practice & Sports Medicine (www.cfpsm.com) and Carolina Performance (www.carolinaperformance.net).



AIHF makes staying healthy easy for you and all of the members of your family

One-stop location for your health and wellness. AIHF offers a wide variety of providers under one roof – family practice physicians and specialists, lab testing, radiology, pharmacy, café, fitness center and much more, including complimentary childcare while you visit your doctor. Our natural and relaxing environment is ideal for the entire family.

Need a location for a healthy lunch? Patti's Café offers a variety of freshly prepared salads, sandwiches and smoothies.

Join a gym where you can exercise on your own or select from a menu of group classes to renew your energy. HealthTrax Fitness & Wellness has a wide variety of options – specialty classes for all ages, youth programs and silver sneakers for older adults – and convenient hours suited for your schedule.

A massage or spa day can renew your spirit. Park Centre Spa offers a full range of advanced spa services that will leave you feeling relaxed and refreshed.

Have multiple medications for you and your family? Health Park Pharmacy can sync all of your family's prescriptions so that you pick up once a month – or they can deliver to you!



HealthFit Q&A

ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS
ABOUT HEALTHY LIVING

If you have a question for an AIHF provider, please contact us at info@aihf.net. Questions will be selected and answered in future issues of HealthFit.

How do you protect yourself from memory loss? Take some simple steps to exercise your brain.

- Exercise has been found to boost the development of brain cells and pushes oxygen to the brain. Walking is an excellent form of exercise that older adults can do, and it also improves overall fitness.
- Work crossword puzzles, number puzzles and other games that employ strategic thinking. It's even better — and more fun — if you engage others.
- Read challenging books, newspapers and magazines.
- Stay in touch with friends and family. Social activities will keep your mind more active by employing different parts of your brain during interactions.
- Be sure to keep a well-balanced, healthy diet. Just as food feeds the rest of your body, it also feeds the brain.
- Keep stress under control. Studies have shown that the stress hormone, cortisol, can damage the brain over time, resulting in memory problems.
- Test your brain. Try to complete activities that you have done throughout your life. If you have difficulties, it may be time to seek help from a mental health practitioner. Even one visit can help you develop a plan to improve your memory.

That old adage "if you don't use it, you lose it" is very applicable to the brain. Keep yourself active, healthy and challenged throughout your life.

Eric Morse, MD • Carolina Performance
www.carolinaperformance.net • 919-676-9699

Q: How does Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy help children who have been diagnosed with autism?

A: Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by impairments in social interactions, difficulty with communication, and restrictive and repetitive behaviors. Many research studies have demonstrated that those with autism have decreased blood flow to several areas of the brain. Depending on the affected area of the brain, different clinical presentations may be seen. In some cases, a child may exhibit repetitive, self-stimulatory and unusual behaviors. In others, a child may have decreased language development, auditory processing problems or decreased IQ. Additionally, some autistic children have high levels of inflammation in the brain, as well as in other organs of the body.

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) can help by providing more oxygen to the brain and helping areas of decreased blood flow and inflammation. A study published in the Journal of Pediatrics in 2007 reported that after 40 sessions of HBOT, 80 percent of autistic children enrolled in a randomized study showed clinical improvement. Since not every child battling autism will show improvement after HBOT, baseline examination is necessary to determine potential benefit of HBOT. After a series of 40 HBOT sessions, re-evaluation should be done to determine improvement.

Jeff Tritt • Carolina Hyperbarics
www.nchbo.com • 919-720-4377

Healthcare Reform: Did You Know?

Do you need help in finding a healthcare provider or services for an aging parent? The Affordable Care Act website offers comparison lists of physicians, hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies and dialysis facilities. This site can help you determine quality of care and services provided specific to your loved ones' needs. www.healthcare.gov/prevention



AIHF Providers

NAME	PHONE
American Cancer Society	919-334-5218
Boylan Healthcare	919-781-9650
Carolina Cardiology of WakeMed	919-781-7772
Carolina Family Practice & Sports Medicine	919-238-2000
Carolina Hyperbarics	919-720-4377
Carolina Performance (Mental Health)	919-676-9699
Center for Chiropractic & Wellness	919-845-3280
Conference Center	877-955-2009
The Dermatology Center of Raleigh	919-573-9030
Digestive Healthcare	919-791-2040
Duke General Surgery of Raleigh	919-847-8235
EastPoint Prosthetics and Orthotics	919-844-7897
Health Park Pharmacy	919-847-7645
Healthtrax Fitness & Wellness	919-847-2393
Healthy Diets	919-870-1001
Integrative Healing Partnerships	919-608-1153
Lipoprotein & Metabolic Disorders Institute	919-569-5971
On Assignment Healthcare Staffing	919-334-0175
Park Centre Spa	919-846-1920
Patti's Café	919-803-8703
Quest Diagnostics (Laboratory)	866-697-8378
Raleigh Endoscopy Center - North	919-256-7980
Sports & More Physical Therapy	919-845-6160
Triangle Orthopaedic Associates	919-846-3938
Wake Radiology	919-676-7575
Williams Property Group	877-974-3131
Youth Activity Center	919-847-2393

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Upcoming Events

PARK CENTRE spa

Oncology Skin Care

Learn how to restore, condition, hydrate and protect your skin with organic and synthetic-free products that are specially designed for cancer patients.

Guest speaker: Anne Willis, De La Terre Skincare

Tuesday, April 23 | 10 to 11 a.m. & 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Advanced Skin Care Solutions for Sun Damage

Understand the sun's impact on your skin and how to reverse the signs of aging using the newest products.

Thursday, May 16 | 6 to 7 p.m.

Park Centre Spa, Suite 131

RSVP to 919-846-1920 or visit www.parkcentrespa.com



Mechanical Diagnosis & Therapy of the Lumbar Spine

Learn more about the spine and the latest treatments in a three-day session designed for healthcare professionals.

Friday, June 21 to Sunday, June 23

AIHF Conference Center, Garden Level
For more information, call 919-363-1957
or email kmclaughlin@triangleortho.com