

Alzheimer's Caregiver Tips

Tips for Everyday Care for People With Dementia

Early on in Alzheimer's and related dementias, people experience changes in thinking, remembering, and reasoning in a way that affects daily life and activities. Eventually, people with these diseases will need more help with simple, everyday tasks. This may include bathing, grooming, and dressing. It may be upsetting for the person to need help with such personal activities. Here are a few tips to consider early on and as the disease progresses:

- Try to keep a routine, such as bathing, dressing, & eating at the same time each day.
- Help the person write down to-do lists, appointments, and events in a notebook or calendar.
- Plan activities that the person enjoys and try to do them at the same time each day.
- Consider a system or reminders for helping those who must take medications regularly.
- When dressing or bathing, allow the person to do as much as possible.
- Buy loose-fitting, comfortable, easy-to-use clothing, such as clothes with elastic waistbands, fabric fasteners, or large zipper pulls instead of shoelaces, buttons, or buckles.
- Use a sturdy shower chair to support a person who is unsteady and to prevent falls. You can buy shower chairs at drug stores and medical supply stores.
- Be gentle and respectful. Tell the person what you are going to do, step by step while you help them bathe or get dressed.
- Serve meals in a consistent, familiar place and give the person enough time to eat.

Tips for Changes in Communication and Behavior for People With Dementia

Communication can be hard for people with Alzheimer's and related dementias because they have trouble remembering things. They also can become agitated and

<https://www.alzheimers.gov/life-with-dementia/tips-caregivers>

Alzheimer's Caregiver Tips

anxious, even angry. In some forms of dementia, language abilities are affected such that people have trouble finding the right words or have difficulty speaking. You may feel frustrated or impatient, but it is important to understand that the disease is causing the change in communication skills. To help make communication easier, you can:

- Reassure the person. Speak calmly. Listen to his or her concerns and frustrations. Try to show that you understand if the person is angry or fearful.
- Allow the person to keep as much control in his or her life as possible.
- Respect the person's personal space.
- Build quiet times into the day, along with activities.
- Keep well-loved objects and photographs around the house to help the person feel more secure.
- Remind the person who you are if he or she doesn't remember, but try not to say, "Don't you remember?"
- Encourage a two-way conversation for as long as possible.
- Try distracting the person with an activity, such as a familiar book or photo album, if you are having trouble communicating with words.

Tips for Home Safety for People With Dementia

As a caregiver or family member to a person with Alzheimer's or related dementias, you can take steps to make the home a safer place. Removing hazards and adding safety features around the home can help give the person more freedom to move around independently and safely. Try these tips:

- If you have stairs, make sure there is at least one handrail. Put carpet or safety grip strips on stairs, or mark the edges of steps with brightly colored tape so they are more visible.

Alzheimer's Caregiver Tips

- Insert safety plugs into unused electrical outlets and consider safety latches on cabinet doors.
- Clear away unused items and remove small rugs, electrical cords, and other items the person may trip over.
- Make sure all rooms and outdoor areas the person visits have good lighting.
- Remove curtains and rugs with busy patterns that may confuse the person.
- Remove or lock up cleaning and household products, such as paint thinner and matches.

Tips for Caregivers: Taking Care of Yourself

Being a caregiver can be extremely rewarding, but it can also be overwhelming. Caring for a person with Alzheimer's or a related dementia takes time and effort. It can feel lonely and frustrating. You might even feel angry, which could be a sign you are trying to take on too much. Here are some tips that may offer some relief:

- Ask for help when you need it. This could mean asking family members and friends to help or reaching out to [local services](#) for additional care needs.
- Eat nutritious foods, which can help keep you healthy and active for longer.
- Join a caregiver's support group online or in person. Meeting other caregivers will give you a chance to share stories and ideas and can help keep you from feeling isolated.
- Take breaks each day. Try making a cup of tea or calling a friend. Spend time with friends and keep up with hobbies.
- Get exercise as often as you can. Try doing yoga or going for a walk.
- Try practicing meditation. Research suggests that practicing meditation may reduce blood pressure, anxiety and depression, and insomnia.
- Consider [seeking help](#) from mental health professionals to help you cope with stress and anxiety. Talk with your doctor about finding treatment.