

Tips for Caregivers of Persons with Dementia

Keep things simple

- ✓ Stick to a routine and don't rush the person
- ✓ Clothing, appliances, and utensils should be familiar and easy to use
- ✓ Provide simple choices of clothing and utensils

Provide instruction or explanation

- ✓ Make sure you have the person's attention before you begin a task
- ✓ Use actions to show how a task is to be done, breaking the task down into simpler steps
- ✓ Avoid trying to do things that the person can't do

Promote activity and social contact

- ✓ Encourage the person to do as much as possible on his/her own
- ✓ Promote physical activity and limit inactivity
- ✓ Avoid drinking after 6 p.m., and limit alcohol, tea, coffee, and cola at all times
- ✓ Provide opportunities for brief social interactions with others
- ✓ Avoid crowded or noisy places

Around the home

- ✓ Safety first—use assistive devices, avoid loose rugs and other obstacles and clutter, provide adequate lighting suited to the time of day
- ✓ Use clocks, calendars, labels, newspapers to help maintain orientation to time
- ✓ Use colourful labels to code items
- ✓ Install safety locks or alarms
- ✓ Keep glare and noise to a minimum

Health issues

- ✓ Use suitable hearing aids and glasses
- ✓ Make sure the person takes medication as prescribed
- ✓ Treat other medical conditions as necessary
- ✓ Keep yourself informed about patient care and about available resources
- ✓ Take care of your own mental and physical health

Deal with Problem Behaviours

- ✓ You can try to reason with the person, but if that doesn't work, don't confront, argue, or debate with him or her
- ✓ Stay calm and try to distract the person from problematic situations or behaviours
- ✓ Keep a written record of problem behaviours, and avoid their triggers—discuss your observations with your doctor
- ✓ Make sure the person carries identification
- ✓ If wandering becomes a problem, register the person with the Alzheimer Society Wandering Registry (1-800-616-8816)

You may find the following websites useful:

Alzheimer Society
Caregiver Network Inc.

www.Alzheimer.ca
www.Caregiver.ca

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