

# DEMENTIA HOME CARE

FAMILY CAREGIVERS



Dementia Awareness

## What You Should Know About Caring for an Older Adult with Dementia

*Caring for someone with Dementia can provide special challenges. Follow these tips to help you when taking care of an older adult with Dementia.*

Dementia ([clearcareonline.com](http://clearcareonline.com)) is a general term for loss of memory, thinking, and reasoning skills that are severe enough to interfere with daily life. A person affected by Dementia may have problems with language, memory, behavior, and emotions.

### There are several different kinds of Dementia:

- Alzheimer's disease
- Vascular dementia
- Dementia with Lewy bodies (DLB)
- Mixed dementia
- Parkinson's disease
- Frontotemporal dementia
- Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease
- Normal pressure hydrocephalus
- Huntington's disease
- Wernicke-Korsakoff Syndrome

Caring for an individual who has Dementia can have many challenges. Listed below are some tips on how to overcome the challenges or barriers that are associated with caring for someone with Dementia.

### Communication

Communicating with someone who has Dementia can be one of the most challenging parts of their care. Because they may have difficulty with language, memory and emotions, they may have trouble expressing themselves and communicating clearly.

#### Use these tips when communicating with someone with Dementia:

**1. Limit distractions:** Turn off the TV or radio or move to a quiet setting. Before speaking, make sure you have their attention. Identify yourself by name and relation, call them by their name, and maintain eye contact.

- 2. Ask simple questions:** Ask close ended questions where a simple "yes" or "no" answer will suffice. Ask one question at a time and avoid giving too many options.
- 3. Be patient:** When waiting for a response, be patient with the senior and give them time. You can help prompt them with words if they are having trouble finding the right ones.
- 4. Be affectionate:** Respond with physical expressions such as holding hands, touching, hugging and praise to help keep them encouraged.
- 5. Give step-by-step instructions:** You can make tasks more manageable by breaking down directions into simple steps.



### Communication Tip: Be affectionate

When communicating with someone with Dementia, respond with physical expressions such as **holding hands, touching, hugging** and **praise** to help keep them encouraged.



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## Physical Health

### Nutrition

Individuals with Dementia may forget to eat and drink, so their nutritional needs should be monitored closely. Here are some ways to help make sure they get the nutrition they need.

- Serve foods that are familiar to them.
- Offer snacks and small meals regularly.
- Give them one course at a time so they aren't overwhelmed by options.
- Serve food on plain dishes. Avoid dishes that have patterns.
- Some individuals may have difficulty chewing or swallowing. Serve them foods that are easy to swallow. Eat with them so they can see you chewing.
- Set an alarm to remind them about mealtimes.

### Hygiene

People with Dementia may have lost interest in maintaining their personal hygiene. Follow these tips to help them:

- Play calming music during bath time to help them relax.
- If they are calmer during certain parts of the day, use that time to do their hygiene routine.
- Give simple step-by-step instructions and be patient and encouraging.
- Pay attention to the environment, such as water temperature and lighting and make it comfortable for the senior.



### Home Care Tip:

It can be extremely frustrating for seniors living with Dementia. Help them maintain their dignity and safety by continuing to treat them like individuals and being patient with their unique needs.

## Aggression, Confusion and Agitation

Individuals with Dementia can often become angry, confused and agitated when they aren't able to communicate clearly. Here are some ways caregivers can help when these situations arise.

### Aggression

If the person you care for becomes aggressive:

- Try to see what triggers the aggression so you can prevent outbursts in the first place.
- Remove any items in the house that could be used to cause harm. You can put locks on cupboards containing knives and sharp objects.
- Make sure that doctors and family members know about a senior's aggressive behavior. Doctors can also give advice on how to handle aggressive behavior.
- Protect yourself. Plan safe places in the house that you can go to in case there is an outburst.

### Confusion

If the person you care for becomes confused:

- Avoid making changes to their environment such as rearranging furniture or adding new items to the home.
- Post notes and reminders on bulletin boards as a way for them to know upcoming events or important reminders.
- Put nightlights in hallways and bathrooms so they can find their way in the dark.
- Keep some large clocks and calendars throughout the house so they can reference the day and time.

### Agitation

If the person you care for becomes agitated:

- Reduce intake of foods that cause spikes in energy such as sugar and caffeine.
- Use gentle music, touch, walking or reading to help stop agitation.
- Keep the same routine each day to avoid confusion. Keep photos and familiar objects throughout the house to offer a sense of security.
- Distract the senior with an activity or a snack. This can help them forget the incident.



Limit Sugar



Listen to Gentle Music



Keep Familiar Photos