

Alzheimer's Caregiving Tips

Traveling Overnight

Taking a person with Alzheimer's disease on an overnight trip is a challenge. Traveling can make the person more worried and confused, so it's important to think ahead. Here are some tips.

Plan Ahead

- Talk with the person's doctor about medicines to calm someone who gets upset while traveling.
- Find someone to help you at the airport, train station, or bus station.
- Keep important documents with you in a safe place. These include health insurance cards, passports, doctors' names and phone numbers, a list of medicines, and a copy of the person's medical records.
- Pack items the person enjoys looking at or holding for comfort.
- Travel with another family member or friend.
- Take an extra set of clothing in a carry-on bag.



People with memory problems may wander around a place they don't know well. In case someone with Alzheimer's disease gets lost:

- Make sure the person wears an ID bracelet or something else that tells others who he or she is.
- Carry a recent photo of the person with you on the trip.

After You Arrive

- Allow lots of time for each thing you want to do. Don't plan too many activities.
- Plan rest periods.
- Follow a routine like the one you use at home. For example, try to have the person eat, rest, and go to bed at the same time he or she does at home.
- Keep a well-lighted path to the toilet, and leave the bathroom light on at night.
- Be prepared to cut your visit short if necessary.

Communicate with others when you're out in public. Some caregivers carry a card that explains why the person with Alzheimer's might say or do odd things. For example, the card could read, "My family member has Alzheimer's disease. He or she might say or do things that are unexpected. Thank you for your understanding." Visiting Family and Friends

Spending time with family and friends is important to people with Alzheimer's disease. They may not always remember who people are, but they often enjoy the company. Here are some tips to share with people you plan to visit:

- Be calm and quiet. Don't use a loud voice or talk to the person with Alzheimer's as if he or she were a child.
- Respect the person's personal space, and don't get too close.
- Make eye contact and call the person by name to get his or her attention.
- Remind the person who you are if he or she doesn't seem to know you.
- Don't argue if the person is confused. Respond to the feelings that he or she expresses. Try to distract the person by talking about something different.
- Remember not to take it personally if the person doesn't recognize you, is unkind, or gets angry. He or she is acting out of confusion.
- Have ready some kind of activity, such as a familiar book or photo album to look at. This can help if the person with Alzheimer's is bored or confused and needs to be distracted. But be prepared to skip the activity if it is not needed.



For more caregiving tips and other resources:

- **Read** "Caring for a Person with Alzheimer's Disease": www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers/publication/caring-person-alzheimers-disease
- **Visit** www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers/topics/caregiving
- **Call** the ADEAR Center toll-free: 1-800-438-4380

The Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral (ADEAR) Center is a service of the National Institute on Aging, part of the National Institutes of Health. The Center offers information and publications for families, caregivers, and professionals about Alzheimer's disease and age-related cognitive changes.

