

# Caregiver Assistance News

*“Caring for You - Caring for Others”*

**Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.**

*Serving Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence,  
Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton Counties in Ohio*

**www.aaa7.org** **Helping You Age Better!**



**MARCH 2023**

## **Plan Day-to-Day Activities in Alzheimer’s Care**

One of the results of Alzheimer’s disease (AD) is that the person is unable to plan how to spend their time. They are also unlikely to initiate activities and reach out to friends or family. They often spend much of the day napping and pacing, which results in what others would judge to be an “empty day.” The person may also forget to have meals, toilet, and conduct other routine activities. That is why it is important for you to set up a plan for day-to-day activities that can be followed on a regular basis. In time, the person will become familiar with the routine you have set up, and feel reassured by knowing what to expect.



Having fun and enjoying life is important for everyone. But people with AD lose, little by little, the ability to do those things that they enjoyed in the past. Hobbies, concerts, guests can become too complicated for confused people.

Most caregivers focus on those activities the person with AD no longer should do, such as drive, work, or go out alone. But, to help maintain good self-esteem, it is also important to help the person with AD continue to engage in meaningful activities and participate in family and community life. To do this, decide what activities they can do and help them adjust for abilities that are lost. Accentuate the positive.

Activities should make the best use of a person’s remaining strengths and skills, and be based on interests and hobbies developed over a lifetime. These include activities like going for walks or gardening, which you can enjoy together. Meaningful activities can also reduce the risk of agitation or upsetting behaviors.

We all enjoy experiencing things through our senses—smelling a flower, watching a sunset, or a familiar taste or smell. Some people enjoy touching a smooth piece of wood or stroking a furry animal. The importance of touch becomes even more important as AD progresses. Also, when there is no activity that they can do, touch can become an important part of communication and simply holding hands becomes an activity.

Caring for plants or pets can help the person with AD to express feelings of caring. He or she will still appreciate signs of affection. Depending on your relationship, holding hands, hugging, brushing hair, rubbing on hand cream, or other adult uses of touch (acceptable adult expressions of caring and concern) may provide emotional satisfaction to both of you.

## Example of a Daily Schedule for a Person with Middle-Stage Alzheimer's Disease

Time	Activity	Notes
7:30 am	Morning Wake-Up Routine	<i>Toileting or changing incontinence products.</i>
7:45 am	Breakfast	<i>Give morning medications.</i>
8:30 am	Morning Bathroom Routine	<i>Toileting, bath or shower (if it typically occurs in the morning), brush teeth, etc.</i>
9:00 am	Get Dressed	
9:30 am	Go for a walk, visit with neighbor/family, exercise	<i>If person does not attend day care.</i>
10:30 am	Snack	<i>Encourage fluids.</i>
11:00 am	Bathroom Break	<i>Change incontinence product.</i>
11:20 am	Rest	
12:00 Noon	Lunch	
1:00 pm	Listen to Music	
1:30 pm	Bathroom Break	
1:50 pm	Outside Activity - such as the beauty parlor/barber, drive in the car, etc.	<i>If person can still enjoy this type of experience.</i>
3:30 pm	Snack	
4:00 pm	Bathroom Break	
4:20 pm	Activity - Respite Video/Sorting Cards	<i>If person is overstimulated, try a quiet activity - sign-up at <a href="http://aaa7.trualta.com">aaa7.trualta.com</a> for more ideas and resources.</i>
5:15 pm	Wash-Up for Dinner	
5:30 pm	Dinner	<i>Give evening medication.</i>
6:30 pm	Relaxing Evening Activity - reading, coloring, watching television, etc.	<i>Avoid violent TV shows as those with AD may think it is real and become upset.</i>
7:00 pm	Evening Bathroom Routine (including toileting)	<i>Shower/bath if it did not occur in the morning.</i>
7:30 pm	Change Clothing for Bedtime	<i>If person resists, let them sleep in day clothes.</i>
8:00 pm	Bedtime	

# Taking Care of Yourself

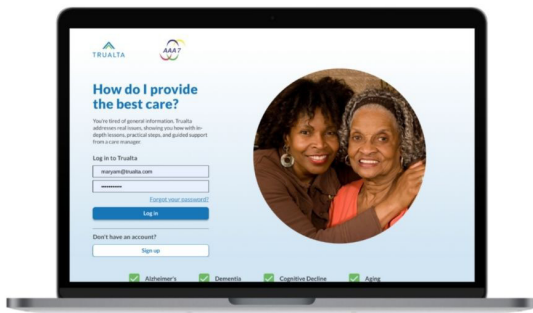
## Guilt Can Be Crippling

You can easily believe that you're not doing a good enough job as a caregiver. Keep in mind that you are doing the best you can, and stay open to suggestions that can help you improve.

Burnout may explain your loss of interest in activities you used to enjoy, your run-down condition, feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, and even wanting to hurt yourself or the person in your care. If you have these feelings, it is time to re-evaluate your caregiving situation. You should take steps to seek more support and relief from the constant responsibility and stress of caring for a person with Alzheimer's disease.



## Trualta helps families learn skills to manage care at home, provided for free by AAA7



- You can register today to access an **interactive eLearning environment**
- Short, quick lessons created by experts in aging
- Easy to use for all ages, completely private and **accessible 24/7**
- **No app required**, view on any browser, laptop, phone or tablet

The AAA7 is excited to offer this interactive opportunity to caregivers to support them in their caregiving role at no charge!

Sign up today!

**aaa7.trualta.com**



## Memory Care

### Your Tone

Regardless of the Alzheimer's stage, speak gently to the person and maintain eye contact. Smile warmly and often. The person with Alzheimer's may not understand or respond, but will sense your feeling and react to that.

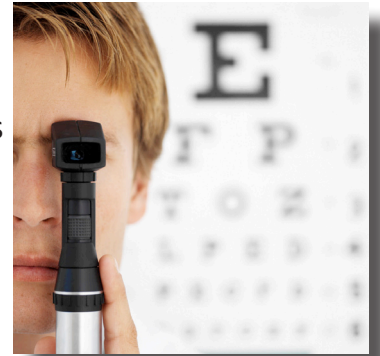
## HEAP Home Energy Assistance Program

Now open for applications for 2022-2023. This program can help eligible Ohioans manage their heating bills. Applications are available from your local Community Action Agency

*If interested or if you have questions, contact your county Community Action Agency or the AAA7 Resource Center at 1-800-582-7277.*

## Safety Tips - Vision and Hearing Care

A person with Alzheimer's should have regular eye examinations. Poor vision can contribute to confusion. These exams can also spot or detect other serious diseases such as diabetes. Finding and treating eye disease early can prevent serious diseases from getting worse and leading to blindness. Tell the doctor of any medicines the person is taking and if there is a family history of glaucoma. Get a yearly eye exam for a person with diabetes.



- Contact your state's Commission for the Blind for information on vision aids for those with low vision.
- Ask for help in finding products ("talking" watches, etc.) and aids that will help the person adjust to low vision.

Hearing loss can make it more difficult for a person to understand and respond appropriately or take part in social activities. It will help the person to hear if you speak slowly and clearly, rather than raising your voice. It is difficult for anyone to adjust to a hearing aid, and even more difficult for someone with Alzheimer's, but it may be worth exploring the possibility of getting one.

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*Some content in this publication is excerpted from The Comfort of Home: Caregivers Series. It is for informational use and not health advice. It is not meant to replace medical care but to supplement it. The publisher assumes no liability with respect to the accuracy, completeness or application of information presented, or the reader's misunderstanding of the text.*



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Facebook: [www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7](https://www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7)

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*Your local Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc. serves the following counties in Ohio: Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton. Services are rendered on a non-discriminatory basis. Those interested in learning more about the services provided through the Area Agency on Aging District 7 can call toll-free at 1-800-582-7277. Here, individuals can talk directly with a trained Resource Specialist who will assist them with information surrounding the programs and services that are available to best serve their needs.*

*The Agency can also be reached via e-mail at [info@aaa7.org](mailto:info@aaa7.org).*