

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 2025

Activities to Engage and Entertain

Most caregivers focus on those activities the senior or a person with Alzheimer's (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 senior continue to engage in meaningful activities and participate in 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 still enjoy together. For a person with Alzheimer's, 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, stroking a furry animal, or placing their hand under running water. The importance of touch becomes even more important as AD progresses. Also, when there is no activity they can do, touch can become an important part of communication and simply holding hands becomes an activity.

There are many activities that encourage non-verbal (using body language, movement, etc.) emotional expression. For example, 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.

Listening to music and singing can be both enjoyable and calming. Memory of song lyrics can remain longer than the person's ability to carry a conversation.

Activities with children can bring joy and laughter. It also helps the older adult feel they are teaching or helping. In the early stages, just a reminder or a cue may be enough to get them going, and they may be able to carry on from there.

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To keep activities enjoyable:

- Establish a routine that includes a balance of rest and activity.
- Recognize limitations. Parties, trips or concerts may be too stimulating and exhausting.
- Adjust the activity to make it possible for them to participate.

Don't tell a person with AD about an activity you have planned too far in advance because this may cause anxiety, not pleasant expectation.

Finding the Right Activity

An activity doesn't have to be something out of the ordinary. Try modifying regular activities of daily life (ADLs) so that the senior or a person with dementia can still do them. Helping a person bathe is an opportunity to feel water, smell soap, tell a story.

Chores such as dusting, sweeping, doing laundry, preparing food and cooking can be satisfying activities. Even bathing, shaving and getting dressed can provide an opportunity for chatting and reminiscing, singing or telling jokes. Making these everyday ADLs enjoyable can improve cooperation, so you both can enjoy them.

- Consider ways the person in your care can continue to participate in activities enjoyed in the past. If they used to play tennis, but can no longer keep score, try just hitting the ball back and forth.
- Doing activities or chores that recall a person's work-related past.
- Try something new. In spite of AD, people often discover talents they may not have expressed before, such as painting or collage art.
- Break an activity down into simple steps that can be completed in a short time.

Be generous with praise and do not criticize or correct mistakes, although you may need to help if the activity becomes too difficult. Don't get upset if they walk away in the middle of the project. People with AD are easily distracted and fatigued.

Horticultural Therapy

Gardening is one of the oldest healing arts. The goal is to improve mental and physical health and the person's spirits. The benefits are many, such as:

- Exercises eyes and body.
- Provides leisure activities when the person can no longer do other activities.
- Promotes interest and enthusiasm for the future.
- Provides something to talk about.
- Encourages a person to walk and bend.
- Improves confidence and provides a feeling of being useful.
- Allows time to daydream.
- Makes it possible to grow useful house plants or vegetables.
- Allows a person to be in fresh air and enjoy the soothing sounds of nature.



To Make Gardening Easier

Make sure that proper body mechanics (positions) are used. Avoid twisting the body, face in the direction of the work being done, and lift using the strength of the upper body and legs. A weightlifter's belt can provide back support.

Taking Care of Yourself

Have Fun!

There's no age limit on the enjoyment of playing games. Games relieve boredom and stress. They also help exercise our brains. Playing certain games might benefit mood, memory, concentration, reasoning, and imagination. Games might be especially helpful for your brain if they require you to learn something new.



Many games can be played and completed in less than 30 minutes for those with limited attention spans. For people with vision problems, find games with large type. Card games such as Gin Rummy, Spades or Canasta are enjoyable.

Source: "https://www.greatseniorliving.com/articles/fun-activities-for-seniors" Fun Activities for Seniors: Over 100 Ways to Play

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21
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25
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**Webinar:
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HEAP
Home Energy Assistance Program

Now open for applications for 2024-2025.
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.



1.800.582.7277
info@aaa7.org

Memory Care

Monitor TV

Some people with AD get very upset watching violence on TV because they think it is real. Careful TV monitoring is important.

Safety Tips: Limitations and Solutions

Limitation	Tip
Poor Memory	Focus on the present. "Today is a sunny day," rather than "Do you remember that winter snowstorm?"
Talking About the Past	Use this opportunity to learn about the past (as the person currently remembers it).
Difficulty with Orientation to Time and Place	Provide cues such as pictures of a toilet on the bathroom door or a spoon glued to the kitchen door to help the person find their way around the house.
Doesn't Understand What to Do	Simplify the instructions and speak slowly. Show how to do it.
Not Paying Attention	Perhaps they are tired, or the activity is not interesting, too difficult, or confusing - try at a later time.
The Activity Does Not Get Done	Do not focus on the product. Keep reminding yourself it is not important.
The Senior Does it Wrong	Keep your sense of humor!

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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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 email at info@aaa7.org.