

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!**



JANUARY 2018

Alzheimer's - Resistance to Care

In Alzheimer's disease (AD), when a person for whom you care seems to be refusing to cooperate with the activities of daily living such as dressing or bathing, you may think they are resisting care. Sometimes, when a person with Alzheimer's says "no" they may be labeled uncooperative.

People with AD may become upset when somebody touches them. You may be trying to do something to help, but they do not understand what's going on. They may be feeling uncomfortable, powerless, frightened, tired, in pain, or confused. They cannot explain how they want to be treated.



What to do? Try to place yourself in the shoes of the person with Alzheimer's disease and you may be able to avoid causing resistance. You may be able to change your approach to reduce these responses and actually be able to help the person to cooperate with you.

Tip

Think about what it would feel like to constantly be told to do something you may not feel like doing or cannot understand what is expected of you.

In order to provide good care, you need to know how to respond to all the different ways in which the illness affects the person with dementia. This means that in many cases the person shows you with actions what can no longer be communicated in words. So, behaviors are more than behaviors. They are messages about ideas, feelings, and needs the person is telling you about in the best way he or she can.

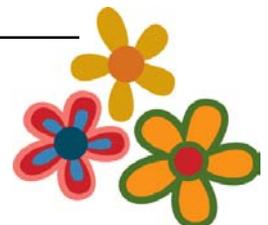
Tip

The best thing you as caregiver can do is always ask yourself, "What are they trying to say by doing this?"

Memory Care

Turn negatives into positives.

Instead of saying, "Don't go there," try saying, "Let's go to the dining room."



Gentle Reminders

In the early stage of Alzheimer's disease, you may simply need to remind the person to attend to their personal care needs. Some people with AD lose their former high standard of personal hygiene. This can be upsetting to the people around them. Sometimes, this is because of memory problems. For example, the person may want to go into the bathroom to take a shower, forget why they are there, come back out, and when asked, say that they have showered. Remember, they are not lying, but saying what they think they are supposed to say or believe to be true. They may have forgotten whether or not they have showered and even become annoyed that you are questioning.



As always, don't argue. You can suggest later that they shower. As with all personal care activities, try to follow the person's usual routine. Follow the same routine day to day. By knowing what to expect, the person with dementia will be less likely to need to be told what to do and will have an internal sense of what is going to happen, giving them a sense of control. Most people are used to grooming in the early morning and then again late at night. If the person is able to do these tasks on their own, simply observe and make sure that the tasks are being done and not forgotten. These activities help provide a predictable structure for the day.

How Much Care to Give

A person in the early stage, and even later, may enjoy going to the beauty parlor or barber shop as he or she always has. However, you may need to make the appointment for them, and then make sure they know when it is time to go. Generally, people in the early stage can manage most aspects of personal care on their own and you may only need to keep a friendly eye out for slip-ups.

In the middle stage, your involvement in personal care will increase considerably even if the person does not have another medical condition that leaves them frail and in need of assistance. People in the middle stage are more confused, cannot plan their activities, or make such simple choices as to what to wear and the order in which clothing needs to be put on. Bathing, dressing, eating, toileting, and mouth care are some of the activities of daily living that will require your assistance. When helping a person with any activity, you will want to first give verbal instruction, then use visual gestures and finally, touch. It may be effective to combine a verbal cue with a gesture so that the person can receive the information in more than one way. For instance, if you want the person to stand up, you can ask them to stand up, raise your hands up in a matching gesture, and then if necessary touch their arm or leg to get them started. Only give as much help as is needed so that the person can remain as independent as possible. Offer encouraging words to show your appreciation for their efforts.

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

Pet Therapy

Seniors often feel isolated whether living alone at home or in a facility. Human-Animal Interactions published a study of elderly dog owners revealing that 75 percent of men and 67 percent of women considered their dog their only friend. Some studies have found that just a few minutes a day petting or visiting with an animal lowers the stress hormone of cortisol and increases the feel-good hormone of serotonin. The results can range from lowered heart rates and blood pressure to decreased depression.



Pets can also benefit caregivers. Caregiving can make you feel like you are all alone. While adding a pet to the list of loved ones you have to care for may seem like overload, having that happy face and wagging tail ready to give you some unconditional love when you return home can benefit caregivers as well. Studies have found that caregivers are twice as likely as the general public to develop chronic illness due to the prolonged stress of caring for a loved one. If having a pet can increase your exercise, lower your blood pressure and bring a smile to your face, maybe having a pet is just what the doctor ordered.

Source: www.alz.org Blog: *How Caregivers Can Use Pet Therapy to Care for Their Loved Ones* by Sherri Snelling

Upcoming Family Caregiver Workshops

Gallia County - Starting February 7th

Jackson County - Starting February 7th

Pike County - Starting March 2nd

*Ross County - Starting March 5th
(For Caregivers of Children with Special Health
and Behavioral Needs)*

Call 1-800-582-7277, extension 247 or 284, to learn more or to register.

Log on to www.aaa7.org to download our 2018 Wellness Calendar to learn more about wellness classes provided through the AAA7 to those age 60 and over at no cost.



Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

F32-URG, PO Box 500 • 160 Dorsey Drive • Rio Grande, OH 45674-0500

Toll-Free Number: (800) 582-7277 • TTY: 711 (Relay Ohio)

Website: www.aaa7.org • E-Mail: info@aaa7.org • Facebook: www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7

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.

Safety Tips - Alzheimer's Bathroom Safety —————

A safe, comfortable home can help a person with Alzheimer's feel more relaxed and less overwhelmed. A few safety tips:

- Clear out or lock the medicine chest and the cabinet under the sink where poisonous substances have been kept.
- Use a cordless rechargeable electric razor. A safety razor should only be used with supervision.
- Control water temperature in the sink, tub, and shower to prevent accidental burns.
- Put screens over open drains.
- Have the toilet seat in a contrasting color to the floor.
- Remove locks on bathroom doors.