

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!**



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Activities in Alzheimer's Care

The work we do and the activities we choose for fun tell the world a lot about us. But people with Alzheimer's disease (AD) and dementia lose, little by little over time, the ability to do those things that make them who they are.

Most caregivers focus on those activities the person with AD no longer should do, such as drive, work, go out alone, or make important decisions. 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 still enjoy together. Meaningful activities can also reduce the risk of agitation or upsetting behaviors. A person with AD and/or dementia has difficulty planning and choosing activities. 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. To keep activities enjoyable, follow these tips:

- Establish a routine that includes a balance of rest and activity.
- Recognize limitations. Long trips, three-act plays, or a seat in the balcony far from the restroom are going to cause trouble.
- 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.

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

Finding an Activity

An activity doesn't have to be something out of the ordinary. Try modifying regular activities of daily life (ADLs) so that the person with dementia can still do them.

Chores such as dusting, sweeping, doing laundry, preparing food and cooking can be satisfying activities. Even

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bathing, shaving and getting dressed can provide an opportunity for chatting and reminiscing, singing or telling jokes. Making these necessary ADLs enjoyable will probably improve cooperation so you both can enjoy them.

Make Activities More Fun

- Consider ways the care receiver can continue to participate in activities enjoyed in the past: if they used to play tennis, but can no longer keep score, how about just hitting the ball back and forth? If they enjoyed cooking, why not make a meal together?
- Don’t be afraid to try something new. As people age, their interests may change. In spite of AD, or some times because of it, people often discover talents they may not have expressed before, such as painting, making a collage, or even a greater sense of spirituality.
- Doing activities or chores that recall a person’s work-related past can bring much happiness.
- Break an activity down into simple steps.
- Choose an activity that can be completed in a relatively short time. The process is more important than the product: it may be just as much fun to make mashed potatoes as a perfect soufflé.
- Be generous with praise, do not criticize or correct mistakes, although you may want to lend a hand if some aspect of the activity becomes too difficult or time-consuming.
- Don’t get upset if they walk away in the middle of the project. People with AD are easily distracted and fatigued.
- Keep your sense of humor. Alzheimer’s is not funny, but amusing things do happen.

Source: *The Comfort of Home for Alzheimer’s Disease*

Alzheimer’s Limitations and Tips

Problem	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.
Doesn’t understand what to do	Simplify the instructions and speak slowly. Show what is to be done.
Not paying attention	Perhaps they are tired, or the activity is not interesting, too difficult, or confusing. Try at a later time.
The job does not get done	Do not focus on the product.



Taking Care of Yourself

Depression in Heart Disease

People with heart failure and their caregivers have depression at much higher rates than the general public. Both the caregiver and the person in their care need to be aware of mood changes in themselves and each other. One important reason to treat depression is that it is associated with increased risk of cardiovascular disease. This affects both you and the person in your care. Fortunately, depression responds well to treatment. It can be difficult to talk about depression, either about your own depressed feelings or the feelings of the person in your care. Nonetheless, it is important to have that talk with a healthcare provider and discuss a treatment plan.

Source: The Comfort of Home for Chronic Heart Failure



FREE

Welcome to Medicare Webinar

Wednesday, April 27th at 10:00 am

Register online: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5977746074626716942>
or call us at 1-800-582-7277, ext 224 for assistance with registering.

Memory Care

Making Art - Some people enjoy making simple pottery out of clay or homemade flour dough. Try cutting shapes from the dough with cookie cutters. Stamps made with a stamp pad produce instant art, and can be an enjoyable repetitive activity. Keep in mind the capabilities of the person in your care and offer gentle encouragement.

HEAP Home Energy Assistance Program

Now open for applications for 2021-2022.
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.

Fall-Free Fact

with the Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7) and Shawnee State University Occupational Therapy Program

One-fourth of Americans age 65 and over fall each year. Falls are not a normal part of aging and are preventable! Gain knowledge on the steps you can take to ensure your safety while staying independent by using the CDC's "MyMobility Plan" tool at www.cdc.gov.

Safety Tips - More Light Helps

As people age, less light reaches the back of their eyes where they sense color and motion. Using 100-watt bulbs or higher makes things easier to see. (Don't use bulbs that exceed the wattage rating on lamps and lighting fixtures, since this can present a fire hazard.) Put night-lights in the bedroom, bathroom, and hallways.



Ask your doctor for a referral to an occupational therapist who can help you devise other ways to prevent falls. Some solutions are easily installed and relatively cheap. Others may require professional help and more of an investment. If the plan is to stay in the home for many more years, an investment in safety and fall prevention may make that possible.

Note, a person with Alzheimer's disease should have regular eye examinations because poor vision can contribute to confusion. These exams can also spot or detect other serious diseases, such as diabetes. Finding and treating symptoms early can prevent serious diseases from getting worse and leading to blindness. Tell the doctor of any medicines taken and also tell the doctor if there is a family history of glaucoma.

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 e-mail at info@aaa7.org.