

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 2017

Alzheimer's - Balancing Safety and Risk

How can you decide what activities are safe for a person with Alzheimer's disease (AD) versus what are not? The doctor who conducted the diagnostic evaluation can help you answer this question. In the case of driving safety, driving tests can be arranged. Your own experience and observations of the person can help you decide what to do. Friends and family may have noticed something you did not. For example, if you, or other people, feel anxious because of unsafe driving, you cannot ignore the problem.



Your decisions will be easier to carry out if the person with dementia is aware of the diagnosis and understands that they will not be able to do things they did in the past. However, often the person denies the changes and resists your efforts to limit their activities—whether it be driving, using public transportation alone, using power tools, or cooking. The doctor, family members, friends, or neighbors may be able to help you work around the problem. For example, friends or family may offer to drive you and the person you are caring for where you need to go or perform other activities without mentioning that it is because they are no longer able to do them.

Physically Aggressive Behavior

At some point in the course of the disease, people with Alzheimer's may become physically aggressive, although this does not occur as often as people think. They may sometimes throw things, hit, kick, bite, or pinch the caregiver or others they come into contact with. They may not know why they are doing this, and they may not even realize that they are doing it. This behavior can be frightening. These behaviors are probably an indication that the person with AD is upset about some need not being met, such as a physical need—comfort, pain, hunger or an emotional need such as boredom, fear or sadness.

Violent behavior may be the way this person is responding to changes in their brain or to events that they do not understand and interpret as dangerous. These might include an unfamiliar person entering the room, attempts to take something away from them, fear of being hurt, an exaggerated response to something happening suddenly, not knowing how to express anger appropriately, or just an effort to avoid complying with a demand.

When it looks like the person you are caring for is becoming upset and may seem to be asking for a fight perhaps by using threatening language, you may feel frightened and tempted to fight back. Try to stay calm, use a reassuring tone, and distract the person. Usually, the person with Alzheimer's disease will calm down in a few minutes if you do not fight back or can redirect them.

The ABC Way to Understand Alzheimer's Behavior

A person with Alzheimer's disease may sometimes act in ways that are aggressive. They may hit, scratch or fight with the caregiver. This does not always happen. If this does happen, it is likely to be when the person is in the middle stage of Alzheimer's disease.



These actions can be upsetting and are often hard for caregivers to manage. It helps to have a plan. One that many people find easy to remember is called ABC. Here is what this means:

A means Antecedent. This refers to events that happen just before an upsetting action.

B is the Behavior. This means any upsetting or aggressive action done by the person who has Alzheimer's disease.

C refers to the Consequence. This includes events that happen after the behavior. Sometimes, these events can make the situation worse.

Source: The Comfort of Home for Alzheimer's Disease: A Guide for Caregivers

alzheimer's association®

Gallia County

A representative from the Alzheimer's Association will be at the Holzer Thaler Building (beside Fruth Pharmacy on Jackson Pike) the third Wednesday of every month from 9:00 am - 2:30 pm . Please call (740) 710-1821 to make an appointment.

Jackson County

Lunch and Learn (for Family Caregivers) - February 28th from 12 Noon - 1:30 pm at Holzer Medical Center - Jackson. Topic: Living with Alzheimer's for Caregivers: Middle Stage. Call (740) 710-1821 to register.

Lunch and Learn (for Professionals - 1 CEU available) - March 14th from 12 Noon - 1:00 pm at Holzer Medical Center - Jackson. Topic: Effective Communication Strategies. Call (740) 710-1821 to register.

"As long as I'm alive, I'll continue to try to understand more because the work of the heart is never done." - Muhammad Ali

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

Dependency and Isolation

Fears of dependency and loneliness, or isolation, are common in families of those who are ill, especially those with Alzheimer's. The person needing care can become more and more dependent on the one who is providing it. At the same time, the caregiver needs others for respite and support. Many caregivers are ashamed about needing help, so they don't ask for it. Those caregivers who are able to develop personal and social support have a greater sense of well-being.



Support group meetings are a place to express feelings—joy, sadness, anger or frustration—among a group of people who can listen and share similar experiences. It's a chance to meet others to exchange thoughts and resources. Ask your local religious organization, disease chapter, hospital, or Area Agency on Aging if there is a support group near you or about starting one.

Don't Fall - Be Safe!

Due to changes in the brain that are caused by Alzheimer's disease (AD), people with AD are at especially high risk of falling. Slower reaction time or difficulty recognizing changes in the height or depth of a step, for example, can lead to tripping and falling.

Changes in balance and coordination combined with poor memory can make it difficult for a person with AD to get from one place to another and avoid hazardous objects at the same time.



Are you a current Medicare recipient? The Medicare Prescription Discount may help you!

Call the Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7) today to see if you are eligible to receive benefits that could lower your prescription co-pays, cover all or part of your Medicare Part D monthly premiums, and eliminate the "donut hole" of coverage for your medications.

1-800-582-7277

TTY: 711 | e-mail: info@aaa7.org

Serving 10 counties in Ohio including Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton



Community Wellness Classes

Chronic Disease Self-Management • Diabetes Self-Management
A Matter of Balance Falls Prevention • Tools for Caregivers

Contact us to learn more about these FREE classes!

1-800-582-7277 or
info@aaa7.org



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Safety Tips - *Dementia and Gun Safety*

Put a plan in place as soon as a diagnosis is made, just as you might plan to remove a driver's license or a checkbook. A person with Alzheimer's disease should not have access to guns. Depression is common among those with dementia and can increase the risk of suicide, especially if there is access to a firearm. Dementia affects one's ability to control emotions, which can result in bursts of unpredictable anger. In the early stages of the disease, include the person in the conversation. If the person is too confused for a discussion, it may be time to just confiscate the gun.

- Don't simply remove bullets or disable the gun. Police officers will not be aware that the firearm is disabled and they could injure anyone holding it.
- Remove holsters and other reminders of the gun.

Law enforcement and the doctor may provide advice. The Alzheimer's Association has counselors available 24/7: 1-800-272-3900. It offers guidance on how to minimize risks associated with firearms in homes where a person has dementia. Visit www.alz.org and search "Safety and the Right to Bear Arms."