

# 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!**



**MAY 2025**

## **Alzheimer's Disease - Steps to Avoid Injury**

People with Alzheimer's Disease (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 say how they want to be treated.

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 as they did in the past. 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 he or she where you need to go or perform other activities without mentioning that it is because the person is 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 be an unfamiliar person entering the room, attempts to take something away, 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 they are getting upset and perhaps using threatening language, you may feel frightened. Try to stay calm, use a reassuring tone, and distract the person. Usually, the person with Alzheimer's will calm down in a few minutes if you do not argue back or you can redirect them.

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## Avoiding Injury *(continued from Page 1)*

### Steps to Avoid Injury

Don't try to restrain the person. This could cause serious injury to both of you.

1. Get out of striking distance. Step away so that they cannot reach you.
2. Call for help if you need it. You can call a friend, family member, or neighbor to help you get the person calmed down. If you have to, you can also call 911 or your local emergency number.
3. Try to avoid creating a situation in which the person with AD will feel threatened because this will only make them more upset. When things have calmed down, figure out what has set the person off using the ABC method below.

## The ABC Way to Understand Alzheimer's Behavior

A person with Alzheimer's Disease may sometimes act in ways that are aggressive. He or she 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*

### NOTE:

The most important thing to remember is to treat the person with dignity and respect. Avoid talking down to the person or talking to others as if he or she is not there. At all times be aware of your tone of voice and body language. Do not use the kind of high pitch that people sometimes use in speaking to children. Try to lower your pitch and sound and be relaxed. Try not to be bossy or intimidating or stand over the person if they are sitting down. The person in your care may not understand your words, but they may nevertheless respond to the tone of your voice or your posture and will intuitively decide whether to respond to you as friend or foe.

## Memory Care - Paranoia

*Paranoia in people with AD appears as unrealistic beliefs, usually of someone seeking to do them harm. They may hoard or hide things because they believe someone is trying to take their possessions. These symptoms can be very distressing both for the person with AD and for you. Remember, what the person is experiencing is very real to them. It is best not to disagree.*

*Try not to take it personally. In this situation it is best to offer to help the person to find the missing item. It will not be helpful to try to convince them that their explanation is wrong or based on poor memory.*

# Taking Care of Yourself

## Feeling Invisible

*"Why doesn't anyone ask how I am doing?" It is easy to feel invisible, as if no one can see you. Everyone's attention is on the person with the illness, and they don't seem to understand what the caregiver is going through. Many caregivers say that nobody even asks how they're doing. Mental health experts say it's not wise to let feelings of neglect build up. Caregivers need to speak up and tell other people what they need and how they feel. Support groups, religious or spiritual advisors, or mental health counselors can teach you new and positive ways to express your own need for help.*

**FREE CAREGIVER SUPPORT UPCOMING WEBINARS**  
 through the Area Agency on Aging District 7's partnership with Trualta

**14 MAY** Webinar: Caregiving 101  
 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Anonymous Talk: Mental Health and Caregiving  
 12 NOON – 1:00 PM **30 MAY**

Scan the QR Code to register today!  
 Or visit [aaa7.trualta.com](http://aaa7.trualta.com)





## 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.  
 Application deadline is May 31, 2025.

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

## Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program

**Applications are available!**  
 Scan the QR Code below to apply or call our Farmers Market Hotline if you have questions.

**1-800-343-8112**

or email

**FarmersMarket@aaa7.org**



# **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. They offer guidance on how to minimize risks associated with firearms in homes where a person has dementia. Visit [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org) and search "Safety and the Right to Bear Arms."

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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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*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](mailto:info@aaa7.org).*