

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!**



JUNE 2023

Dressing with Alzheimer's

In helping a person with Alzheimer's disease (AD) to select and put on clothing, be mindful of the choices they used to make, and try to honor that taste and style. For example, if an older man had worn a tie every day to work but could no longer tie the knot and was frustrated if he could not put the tie on every day, a simple solution is to tie several in advance for him and let him slip the ties on and off. That may be easier for him to do and save you time. Sometimes, a “clip on” tie will work also.



Most people have favorite colors, textures, and types of clothing—and people with dementia often want to wear the same outfit all the time. If you have duplicates of the items the person always wants to wear, they can still be comfortable when clothes are being washed and you will avoid arguments and explanations. Clean out closets and drawers so that out of season or difficult to clean clothes will not be temptingly in view. If the person wants to wear something you don't like, try to accept their choice, unless it is totally inappropriate.

Lay out clothing in the order in which it should be put on. This will provide a cue to those who are unsure what to put on next, and will generally make the process run more smoothly when you have to assist. You will also not need to leave the person to go find a missing piece.

- Use clothes that are easy to put on.
- Store like clothes together.
- Use shoes that slip on or fasten with Velcro®.
- Use socks rather than pantyhose.
- Use pants and skirts with elastic waistbands.
- Use bras with front openers.
- Avoid clothes that have to be put on over the head.
- Replace buttons with Velcro® closures.

Sometimes, people with Alzheimer's disease will undress at inappropriate times. If it is because they are fidgeting and unintentionally opening buttons, consider sweaters without buttons, or a one-piece jump suit. Sometimes, wearing an apron will be a distraction. If things are sewn onto the apron, that will give the person something to touch and feel with their hands, distracting them from trying to remove a shirt or pants. It may be best to have a frail person or someone with poor balance or a disability sit down when you help dress them, unless of course they are bed bound. If the person has a “weak” side, dress it first. For a person who is confined to bed, be sure to smooth out all wrinkles in the clothes and bedding to prevent pressure sores.

Bathing with Alzheimer's

Bathing is often called the most challenging activity for both the person with dementia and the caregiver. What a shame that the idea of relaxing in a warm tub filled with bubbles rarely matches the typical caregiver–care receiver experience. Standing naked, afraid of falling, in a room that may be drafty, with water coming from all kinds of unexpected places may result in pain, fatigue, weakness, confusion and anxiety for the person with Alzheimer's disease. These feelings may also exist before the bath and become worse because of the bath. If "bath" is a bad word, try saying, "Let's get ready for the day (or night as the case may be)."

To make bathing easier:

- Let the person feel in control. Does the person prefer showers or a tub bath, and at what time of day?
- Create a safe atmosphere. Place non-slip adhesives on the floor and bottom of tub, install grab bars to prevent falls, and test the water temperature in advance.
- Use a bath bench.
- Respect the person's dignity. Allow the person to keep a towel around him or her both in and out of the shower, if necessary.
- Don't worry about daily bathing. It doesn't have to be done every day. Sponge baths can be used in between showers and baths.
- Be gentle. The person's skin may be sensitive. Avoid scrubbing. Pat dry, then use lotion.
- Be flexible. If the person does not want a shampoo, use a wash cloth to soap and rinse the hair or a shampoo in a cap. A no-rinse shampoo can be substituted for a regular shampoo.

Talk with the person, tell them what you are going to do next, encourage them to wash areas that they can, and watch that the flow of water is not too strong. These tips can contribute to making bathing a pleasant experience.

Kids Bowl Free

Kids Bowl Free (KBF) is a program that allows kids to bowl each day for free in the Spring and Summer. More than 1,500 bowling centers participate, including many of the bowling locations in our region. This program is designed by bowling centers to give back to the community and provide a safe, secure and fun way for kids to spend time this Summer. Children whose age does not exceed a limit set by a participating bowling center are eligible to register for two free games each day of the KBF program, all Summer long, courtesy of the participating bowling centers along with schools and organizations. Participating bowling centers set their age limits. See the center registration page for more details. Visit the Kids Bowl Free website at <https://www.kidsbowlfree.com/> for more information.



Memory Care

Poor Vision

Don't assume that the reason the person in your care doesn't recognize others is due to Alzheimer's without having their vision checked. If the person in your care does not see well, perhaps new glasses will help. In any case, rather than risking startling the person, it is best to say who you are as you approach.

Our Resource Center is OPEN and available to answer your questions about home and community-based resources in your community!

1-800-582-7277

info@aaa7.org



Taking Care of Yourself

Dependency and Isolation

Fears of dependency and loneliness, or isolation, are common in families of those who are ill. 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. Note, spouse caregivers have special problems as they gradually lose the emotional support of the partner who is ill and must now be his or her emotional as well as physical support. It is especially important for spouse caregivers to seek out a support system.

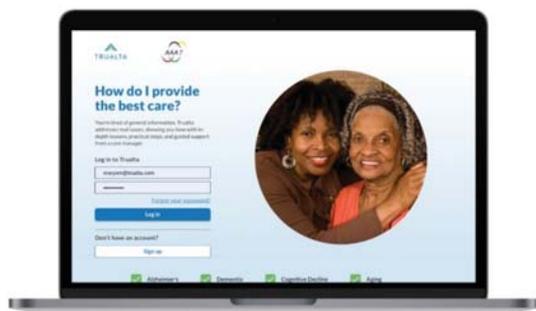


Source: *The Comfort of Home for Alzheimer's Disease: A Guide for Caregivers*

2023 Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

Applications now available! Eligible seniors can receive \$50 in coupons to use with participating farmers in the Program. If you have participated in the past, you must re-apply each year. For more information, call the AAA7 Farmers Market Nutrition Program hotline at **1-800-343-8112** or e-mail **farmersmarket@aaa7.org**.

Trualta helps families learn skills to manage care at home, provided for free by AAA7



- You can register today to access an **interactive eLearning environment**
- Short, quick lessons created by experts in aging
- Easy to use for all ages, completely private and **accessible 24/7**
- **No app required**, view on any browser, laptop, phone or tablet

The AAA7 is excited to offer this interactive opportunity to caregivers to support them in their caregiving role at no charge!

Sign up today!

aaa7.trualta.com



Safety Tips - Early Stage Decisions

In the early stage of Alzheimer's, it is common for caregivers to wonder how much the person can still do on their own, and when they should step in and be protective. Below are some of the questions to ask yourself. Is it safe for the person to:

- Continue driving?
- Continue to work?
- Take medications on their own?
- Travel on their own?
- Make financial decisions that they have been making until now?

You will continually have to evaluate the benefits and risks. The individual may very much want to continue to drive, but if they have an accident because of not driving safely, someone may be hurt or killed. On the other hand, if the person wants to dress himself/herself and cannot select matching clothes, there is no risk, and a lot to gain by letting them dress himself/herself.

*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.