

Caregiving Recommendations

What to Do	What to Avoid Doing
Observe your loved one's behavior closely. Actions may replace words.	Don't expect too much. Avoid criticizing failures and mistakes.
Call your loved one by name often. Get his or her attention before going on.	Try not to interrupt or hurry a response.
Speak in short sentences. Use simple words.	Don't talk to your loved one as if he or she were a small child. Don't talk about him as if he weren't there.
Maintain a calm and gentle tone of voice.	Don't give too much information at once. Provide step-by-step instructions if your loved one needs prompting.
Keep activities simple. Use your loved one's current abilities.	Avoid doing too much for your loved one. Allow him or her to do as much as possible.
Set up a routine for the day and stick to it. Keep your environment predictable—for example, keep the furniture in the same place.	Don't announce upcoming events too far in advance. For example, wait until the day of the appointment to tell your loved one he or she is going to see the doctor.
Plan ahead for all activities. For example, assemble everything you'll need to give your loved one a bath before bringing him or her into the bathroom.	Too many choices—for example, too many foods on a plate or too many choices of what to wear—might be overwhelming. Don't eliminate choices, but keep decisions simple.
Install childproof latches on cupboards that contain medications, cleaning supplies, alcohol, or dangerous utensils. Protect your loved one from these dangers just as you would a small child.	Don't wait for your loved one to ask to go to the bathroom. Take him or her to the bathroom about every 3 hours during the day to avoid accidents.

Caregiver Stress

As you care for your loved one, you also need to take care of your own emotional and physical needs. You won't be able to help your loved one if you don't take care of your own mental and physical health. Watch for signs of depression, changes in your other relationships, and exhaustion. Allow others to help you, or seek out respite care in your community.

Staying Informed

Learning as much as you can about AD will help you care for your loved one and meet your own needs as a caregiver. The following organizations are good sources of both help and information:

- Alzheimer's Association, 800-272-3900, www.alz.org
- U.S. Administration on Aging, 202-619-0724, www.aoa.dhhs.gov
- Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral Center, 800-438-4380, www.alzheimers.org/adear
- American Association of Retired Persons, 800-424-3410, www.aarp.org
- Children of Aging Parents, 800-227-7294, www.caps4caregivers.org
- Eldercare Locator, 800-677-1116, www.eldercare.gov
- National Family Caregivers Association, 800-896-3650, www.nfcares.org
- National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, 800-352-9424, www.ninds.nih.gov/health_and_medical/disorders/alzheimersdisease_doc.htm
- National Institute on Aging/Information Center, 800-222-2225, www.nia.nih.gov
- Family Caregiver Alliance, 415-434-3388, www.caregiver.org