

TRAVELING



Caring for someone with dementia does not mean you have to stop participating in meaningful activities such as travel. However, it does require planning to ensure safety, comfort, and enjoyment for everyone. Whether taking a short trip to see friends or traveling farther for vacation, it is important to consider the difficulties and benefits of travel for a person with dementia.

- Early stages of dementia: a person may still enjoy traveling.
- As the disease progresses, travel may become too overwhelming.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Discuss any travel with the individual's physician to evaluate whether traveling is recommended or safe.
- If the individual's doctor feels travel is permissible, consider the individual's abilities, and safety when choosing how and where to travel.
- Go with the travel option that provides the most comfort and least anxiety.
- Travel to known destinations that involve as few changes in daily routine as possible.
- Keep in mind that there may come a time when traveling is too disorienting or stressful for the person with dementia.
- Prepare family members for the visit by explaining dementia and any changes it has caused. Go over any special needs and explain that the visit may be altered.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

- Advise airlines, hotels, or tour operators that you're traveling with a person who has memory impairment. Provide some examples of your safety concerns and special needs.
- Prepare identification items for your traveling companion including an identification bracelet or clothing tag with their full name and your name. Take important health-and legal-related documentation as well.
- Time your travel. If the person with dementia travels better at a specific time of the day, you may want to make plans accordingly. Take breaks along the way for snacks.
- Allow extra time. Avoid the temptation to cram several activities into one day. You and the person may need more time in between activities to relax and rest. Instead, plan for a single activity and have a couple of alternatives in mind if you end up with extra time.
- Maintain daily routines, including sleep and eating schedules.
- Enroll or have some type of tracking device/ID Bracelet in case of wandering.
- Carry a recent photo of the person with you on the trip.
- It may be helpful to stick with the familiar. Travel to known destinations that involve as few changes in daily routine as possible.
- Evaluate options for the best mode of travel, based on the most comfort and the least anxiety.

TIPS FOR A CALM EXPERIENCE:

- Plan ahead of time.

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- Discuss this plan with the person with dementia, however, do not overload the person with a lot of directions or too much information.
- Allow plenty of time for rest, and do not over-schedule with events.
- Get to the airport well in advance of your flight time.
- Notify airport staff that you are traveling with a person with dementia.
- Avoid scheduling flights that require tight connections.
- Minimize hand luggage.
- For long-haul travel, try to travel with two companions.
- Go through security checkpoints behind your companion.
- Make use of quiet spaces within the airport.
- Use noise-canceling headphones on the flight.
- Consider requesting a wheelchair or motorized cart so that an airport employee is assigned to help you get from place to place.
- Bring favorite snacks.
- Inform relevant staff that you are traveling with a person with dementia.
- Know the warning signs of anxiety and agitation and identify strategies to reduce them.
- Talk with the person's doctor about medicines to calm someone who gets upset while traveling.
- Keep important documents with you in a safe place. These include health insurance cards, passports, doctors' names, and phone numbers, a list of medicines, and a copy of the person's medical records.
- Pack items the person enjoys looking at or holding for comfort.
- Be prepared to cut your visit short if necessary. This may mean purchasing travel insurance if you have booked flights or hotels.
- Travel during the time of day that is best for the person.

INCONTINENCE TRAVEL BAG SUPPLIES

Incontinence is a common senior health condition. Being prepared and using swift and proper continence care techniques reduces awkwardness, whether at home or on the go.

- Complete change of weather-appropriate clothing.
- Plastic bags to contain soiled clothes.
- Adult diapers (experiment with various styles for easy public bathroom removal).
- Booster pads (removable diaper liners).
- Wipes.
- Small towel to stand on.
- Cologne and/or air freshener.

BAG ESSENTIALS:

- Medications.
- Your travel itinerary.
- Change of clothes.
- Snacks.
- Activities.
- A list of emergency contacts.
- Photocopies of important legal documents.
- Photo of your person with dementia.