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Be ready for an emergency department visit

Preparation can improve a visit. Use these handy checklists and fill in these forms now, before any potential trip. Then bring them when you head to the emergency room or into an ambulance.

Whether it is a planned admission or an unexpected emergency visit, the unfamiliar noises and activities of a hospital can be especially upsetting for a person living with dementia.

Preparation can improve a visit. **Be Ready for an Emergency Department Visit** is a series of handy checklists and forms for a person living with dementia to fill out with a family member, friend or caregiver.

Complete these forms *before* a trip to the hospital is necessary, so that the person living with dementia is ready to go. Sometimes there are only a couple of minutes or less to get out the door.

The information provided on these forms will help you communicate the person's needs, making it possible for hospital staff to provide more personalized care.

[Download the checklist to get started ▶](#)

Use the checklist as a guide to work through each of the tools in this series:

- [About Me](#)
- [Who Knows Me Best](#)
- [My Medications](#)
- [My Wishes](#)
- [My Ready-to-Go Bag](#)
- [Plan Ahead for Going Home](#)

Some tips from the ready-to-go bag tool can also be found below:

Pack a Ready-to-Go Bag

Every year, many people living with dementia go to the emergency department. In an emergency, everyone is in a hurry. It is easy to forget important things.

Are you a person living with dementia or a caregiver? Plan ahead. Pack a ready-to-go bag for a future hospital visit. This should contain items needed by both the caregiver and person living with dementia.

Keep the bag handy — where you and ambulance attendants can find it easily.

Pack these items in advance for the person living with dementia

- set of clothes
 - underwear
 - socks
 - slippers
 - pants
 - shirt
- adult pull-ups if toileting is an issue - note: a hospital will have adult briefs and pads, but it may not have pull-ups
- plastic bag to put wet clothes in
- tissues, wet wipes
- skin cream, lip balm
- snacks, bottled water, juice - note: at the hospital, always check with a nurse before you give food, water or juice
- bedside clock with large numbers (with batteries, not electric)
- locating device (if applicable)

Pack these items for the caregiver and family members

- snacks, bottled water, juice
- list of people and their contact information who can come and help
- things to read or use while you wait
 - books, magazines, crosswords, games, cards
 - knitting
 - sketch book and pencils
- pad of paper to write down notes, questions, instructions
- money (change) for parking, vending machines, pay phones

- a copy of the adult with dementia's advance directive health care card locating device (if applicable)
- family physician contact information
- phones and chargers and/or power banks

Pack these items to give to nurses and doctors at the hospital

- the person living with dementia's advance directive, [My Wishes tool](#), health benefit card, and family doctor's contact information
- important information in these tools
 - [About Me tool](#)
 - [Who Knows Me Best tool](#)
 - [My Medications tool](#)

Prepare name tags and notes

- put name tags on the ready-to-go bag and other important items: for example, a walker or wheelchair
- you may not be home when the person living with dementia goes to the hospital, so post a note near the ready-to-go bag and beside entrance doors; the note tells ambulance attendants or other caregivers to take the bag to the hospital
- DO NOT BRING JEWELLERY and other irreplaceable items of value

Where to get more help or information

Active in communities right across Canada, the Alzheimer Society provides information, support and education to people living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, their families and caregivers.

Visit [alzheimer.ca/find](#) to get the details for connecting with your local team. Or call 1-855-705-4636 for our national information and referral line.