

**Factsheet 474 Going on holiday when a person  
has dementia**

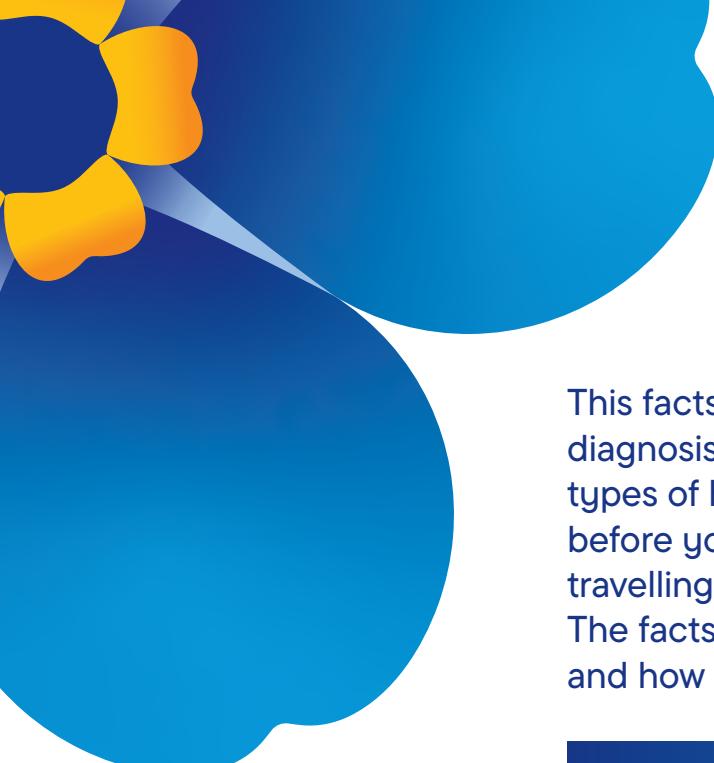
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# Going on holiday when a person has dementia



**Alzheimer's  
Society**

Together we are help & hope  
for everyone living with dementia



This factsheet is for carers of people who have a diagnosis of dementia. It gives advice about different types of holiday and tips on what to pack and prepare before you leave. It includes things to consider when travelling and once you've reached the destination. The factsheet also explains how the law protects you and how you can get financial help for your holiday.

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# 1 Benefits of going on holiday

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A well-planned holiday can have a positive impact on the wellbeing of the person with dementia and those around them. Some of the benefits of going on holiday include:

**Stimulation through new experiences:** A holiday offers the chance to have new and stimulating experiences. These could include talking to different people, going to new places or doing different types of activities. This can build the confidence of a person with dementia and help them feel able to try things that they wouldn't usually do. Holidays can also create new shared experiences for the person and those around them. Some carers find that their relationship with the person they care for gets better after some time away together. There are ways to try new experiences while keeping some of the familiarity of the person's usual routine. For ideas on how to do this see 'Keeping aspects of routine on holiday' on page 4.

**Reminiscing about past experiences:** As well as enabling people to try new things, a holiday offers the chance to revisit familiar places. This can be beneficial for a person living with dementia as it can allow them to reminisce about past holidays or places they used to live. For example, if they used to go to the seaside, the sights, sounds and smells of the beach could bring back happy memories – this could include the smell of sun cream, the sound of waves crashing or the taste of a particular food.

**Reconnecting to important aspects of identity:** Visiting family and friends, or spending time in a country or place can be important to the person's cultural identity. This can also support a person with dementia to reminisce. For example, if the person grew up speaking a different first language, they might benefit from visiting a place where that language is spoken.

**Engaging in mindful activities:** Many holidays include some time spent in nature, which can help to improve mood in people affected by dementia. Spending time outside can also increase a person's sense of wellness. The sensory experience of being in nature allows people to feel more present and connected to the world around them. This can be beneficial for people affected by dementia.

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## 2 Planning a holiday

Deciding to book a trip away can be a big step. For some people with dementia, going on holiday can be confusing. They may need extra support when coping with a new environment or changes to their usual routine. You may also find it hard to relax while providing support to the person you care for.

How you plan your holiday will depend on your interests, personal preferences and budget. When planning a trip for a person living with dementia, you should also consider how the person's dementia affects their daily life. This will help you to decide on the right type of holiday for you and for the person you care for.

Think about yourself as well as the person you care for when making holiday plans. Supporting a person away from home can present more challenges. For example, make sure to build in time to rest while you're away or once you get home. This can help to make the holiday enjoyable and restful for you both.

### Things to consider when planning a holiday

**Length of stay** – shorter trips may be better for some people living with dementia. If they have memory problems or find it hard to concentrate, longer trips can be tiring and harder to appreciate. Day trips can be a nice way of getting away from home without having to stay the night somewhere unfamiliar. For more information see 'Day trips' on page 8.

**Destination** – some people with dementia may prefer a more familiar destination. It could be nice to visit somewhere they have been before that brings back happy memories and is less overwhelming for them. It could also be a nice way for you to connect with the person through an experience that has been important to them in the past.

**Type of transport** – how you travel is likely to depend on what is most practical and affordable. It's sometimes possible to make the journey an enjoyable part of the trip. For example, if you are travelling by car you could stop off at interesting places on the way to break up the journey. Or you could travel in a form of transport that feels more unusual and exciting – for example, travelling by ship could be interesting if the person is not used to it. For more information see 'Different types of transport' on page 14.

**Things to do** – think about what type of activities the person enjoys or used to enjoy. You may be able to shape the holiday around these. For example, if the person has always enjoyed camping you could consider a holiday in a cabin or yurt. This would give you access to useful facilities, while having the benefits of nature nearby.

**Budget** – the cost of a holiday is likely to be an important consideration when you're planning a holiday. For advice on funding a trip away see 'Financial assistance' on page 20.

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## Thinking about the person's individual needs

It can be difficult to know if someone with dementia will benefit from a holiday or struggle to settle into their new surroundings. It can help to ask yourself the following questions:

- Some people find travelling and holidays quite stressful. Has the person enjoyed going on holiday previously?
- How does the person usually manage in new surroundings? Would they become confused and distressed with the change in location, food, language or clothing?
- Travelling can sometimes involve big changes in environment. How do you think the person would respond to a change in temperature or time zone? For example, the person may need to dress differently to adapt to a place's weather or culture.
- Getting to and from places can involve long journeys or several types of transport. Would the person be physically comfortable during the journey? Will they need help to get on and off whatever transport is used?
- If the journey involves passing through security checks (for example, in an airport), would the person understand the need to remove personal items, like jewellery or a turban?
- How will the person move around where they are staying? If they have mobility issues, is the accommodation on the ground floor, or are there accessible lifts? Is the surrounding area accessible?
- If the person needs extra support with going to the toilet, or if they have incontinence, will it be possible to manage this during the journey and on holiday?
- If being able to practise a religion is important to the person, are there opportunities to do that while they are away?
- Will you be able to contact your usual support network if you need advice or help while you are on holiday? If you are unwell while on holiday, will someone else be able to support the person?

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### Keeping aspects of routine on holiday

While a change of scene can be good for a person's mental and physical health, routine is very important for people living with dementia. They may find new surroundings frightening or be confused by a change to their day-to-day activities.

There are ways to keep some of the familiarity of the person's routine when on holiday. This can help the person to feel settled and relaxed in a different environment. These include:

- packing items that the person would recognise from home, like a pillowcase or bath towel
- using the same room fragrance, soap, laundry or cleaning products that are used in the person's home
- taking items that the person uses when doing everyday tasks, like a favourite mug, a comb or a prayer mat
- keeping to regular routines of eating, sleeping and taking medication
- using memory aids as the person would at home, if they use any – for example, a clock that displays the date or a whiteboard for daily reminders.

For more ideas on helping the person to settle in when on holiday see 'Tips for settling in' on page 17.

### Involving the person in the planning

When deciding whether or not to take some time away, it's important to think about what kind of holiday is right for everyone. Talk to the person you're caring for about whether they would like to go on holiday and involve them in the planning as much as possible.

A person with dementia may not be able to make this decision for themselves. This is known as lacking the 'mental capacity' to make that decision. If this is the case, you should consider whether going on holiday is in their best interests. For more information on mental capacity see factsheet 460, **Mental Capacity Act 2005**.

If you need a break from your caring role, you could look into respite care for the person you care for. For more information see factsheets 462, **Respite care in England**, **W462 (Wales)** or **NI462 (Northern Ireland)**.

For some people with dementia a holiday may not be a good idea for a range of reasons. The thought of being away from a familiar setting or routine may make them anxious because of mobility or other needs. A person with dementia may also find the changes too confusing, or they may just not want to go away.

Try not to feel guilty if it isn't possible to arrange a trip away from home. There are still ways to enjoy some of the benefits of a holiday without travelling.

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### If you're not able to travel

It may not be possible to travel. If this is the case, you may still be able to bring the benefits of a holiday to the person.

Look for ways to have new experiences closer to home. For example, you could check if anywhere local offers some of the activities that you might have tried on holiday, like a dancing class. Or you could see if a particular food that the person associates with a holiday is available to order or buy. For example, if the person used to go on holiday to a particular country, check if there are nearby places that offer food from that region. See 'Day trips' on page 8 for activity ideas that involve less travel.

Some tourist websites (such as museums) offer virtual 'armchair' sessions, where you can explore what they have to offer without leaving home. For more ideas on activities to try at home see our booklet 77AC, **The activities handbook**.

If a holiday would have helped the person to connect with their culture, it's worth checking whether there are any culturally-specific groups or events held near you that the person could attend. There are also ways you can bring the culture to the person. For example, they may have family members who could visit, or you could set up video calls for them to spend time together that way. You could also look at books and photographs with the person, share food or play music from the particular place.

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### 3 Different ways to go on holiday

Organising and going on holiday without extra support can be difficult for people living with a disability like dementia. But taking time away from home can be just as important to them. There are ways to make travelling more accessible for people living with dementia. Some options are listed here.

#### Staying with friends and family

If it's possible to stay with friends or family, this can be a great option. It can be more affordable and allow for more flexibility – for example, removing the need to check in or out at a particular time. It can also be a good way for you and the person living with dementia to get support from people you know and trust.

If you are visiting friends or relatives, or if a number of people are going away together, it is a good idea to talk openly about what they should expect. If the person you care for is comfortable with this, it could make the trip more stress-free for everyone. For example, if the person you care for struggles to sleep at night, or if their behaviour and moods have changed, it would help to let the other people on the trip know about this.

If you are staying or travelling with children, it could help to read our information on talking to young people about dementia – see factsheet 515, **Supporting children and young people when a person has dementia**.

You could also discuss ways each person could help if they want to. People are usually more willing to offer support if you are clear about how they can help. For example, someone could support with tasks you would usually do, such as cooking dinner. Or someone might be able to spend time with the person with dementia for a few hours in the day. This can give both you and the person you care for a break from each other. It would also give friends and family the opportunity to spend some quality time with the person with dementia.

## Specialist holidays

There are a range of holiday providers for people who need extra support during their time away. This includes access to specialist equipment or professional carers.

A person with dementia can go on these holidays alone, or a friend, relative or carer can go with them. This can offer an alternative to respite care. It can also enable you to experience time away together, while still having help available when you need it.

Specialist holidays often offer a mix of day trips and on-site activities, with time to socialise as a larger group if you wish.

There are a number of providers offering specialist holidays for people with disabilities and their carers across the UK. This includes people affected by dementia. For contact details see 'Other useful organisations' on page 22.

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## Travelling independently with extra support

Travelling independently (not through a travel company) can be a good idea if you need more choice and flexibility when planning a holiday. There are ways of getting extra help if you need it. For instance, if the person with dementia needs a high level of support on holiday, you could consider going away with someone else. This can ensure that the person with dementia is still supported if you need time alone.

This could be a friend or family member. Or, if you qualify for financial support from social services, you may be able to use your direct payment to fund a paid carer for a short trip. For more information on this see factsheet 473, **Personal budgets** (for England and Wales) or factsheet NI431, **Direct payments** (for Northern Ireland).

If you want to go on holiday without an extra person, try a night away somewhere closer to home first. This will allow you to see how you both manage in a new environment. See 'Day trips' on page 8 for more information on short breaks away.

If you are organising your own trip, travel companies, lodgings and tourist sites may be able to offer support as well. When booking your trip, get in touch with the company and ask what they can offer to meet the needs of someone with dementia. If possible, think about booking 'out of season', as places are likely to be less busy and staff will be able to give you more time and attention. See 'The journey' on page 13 for more ideas on how to get support during your journey.

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### Day trips

Day trips can be a good option if staying away overnight is difficult. They can be cheaper, easier to organise and less disruptive for the person with dementia.

As with any holiday, try to shape the trip around your interests and those of the person you care for. A popular activity for some people who have dementia is visiting heritage sites, like historic houses and estates. Often they include outdoor areas that can be beneficial to people living with dementia. The National Trust manages many heritage sites. It's working to make all of its sites inclusive for people affected by dementia – see 'Other useful organisations' on page 22 for contact details.

Other ideas for day trip activities include:

- an afternoon tea at a hotel or a teahouse
- a visit to a place of worship
- a dance class or a singing group with music from the person's culture
- a trip to a day centre or community group, with games or outdoor activities
- a visit to a botanical garden, community garden or park
- a trip to the seaside
- a pub lunch or a meal out with food from the person's culture
- a gentle exercise class, like tai-chi or qigong
- a day at a shopping mall or a leisure centre
- a culturally-specific reminiscence session
- a visit to a museum or an exhibition
- a concert, gig, theatre or opera
- a trip to an aquarium, farm or zoo.

Some venues (such as museums, galleries and cinemas) might have quieter sessions for people who find busy places overwhelming. Many tourist organisations also work to make their sites accessible.

The charities Euan's Guide and Tourism for All offer information about accessible places to visit – see 'Other useful organisations' on page 22 for contact details.

If it is difficult to organise a day trip, you may be able to try some of these activities virtually. See 'If you're not able to travel' on page 5 for more ideas on how to have new experiences while staying close to home.

## 4 Preparing and packing

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As with any holiday, planning well ahead of time can ensure that everyone has the best possible experience. This is especially true when planning a trip with or for someone who has dementia. Some things to consider are listed here.

### Passport or other identification document (ID)

- Anyone travelling outside the UK needs a valid passport or ID. Even for flights within the UK, most airlines require a passport or an identity document that includes a photograph.
- If you're travelling abroad, it's worth noting that the UK left the European Union (EU) on 31 December 2020. There are different entry requirements for EU countries, so check these in advance. For more information on the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) see page 12.
- Check the expiry date on your passport and on the passport of the person with dementia. For most countries you will need at least six months left on your passport from the date you travel.
- Make a photocopy of the personal details page of your passport, and of the passport of the person you care for. Keep copies at home and in your suitcase.
- When travelling, keep all the person's documents in a safe place that is easy for you to access.

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### Luggage

- Write a list of everything you are taking with you in your luggage, and everything the person with dementia is taking with them. If you need to find items, the list can be a helpful reminder of who has what.
- Make sure all bags and suitcases are clearly labelled with your name and address. If you do not live with the person, label their luggage separately with their name and address.
- Pack any objects that are familiar or reassuring to the person with dementia – for example, a copy of a well-loved photograph or a comforting blanket. These can help the person to settle into a new place or to calm down if they get distressed. For more ideas on items that can help a person with dementia to settle in, see ‘Keeping aspects of routine on holiday’ on page 4.
- Pack any items that will help with daily caring tasks, if it’s possible. For example, if the person has incontinence, you could pack and use a mattress protector in case of accidents. This will depend on where you are staying and whether you have access to laundry facilities once you are there, so it’s worth asking about these in advance.

### Identity bracelet or card

- Someone with dementia may become confused, get lost or have difficulty communicating when they are travelling. Make sure the person has some form of identification on them.
- An emergency identification device, such as those provided by MedicAlert, may be helpful (see ‘Other useful organisations’ on page 22). Alzheimer’s Society also provides free helpcards that people with dementia can have on them in case they need assistance. To order a copy, go to [alzheimers.org.uk/helpcards](http://alzheimers.org.uk/helpcards)
- Make sure that the person has a list of useful contact numbers that they can keep with them at all times. This should include your telephone number and those of anyone else who is on the trip. The list could also include emergency numbers. If you’re travelling abroad, all UK telephone numbers should include the UK dialling code of +44 instead of the first 0.

## Medication

- If you or the person with dementia is taking medication, you should keep this with you at all times. If you are likely to be separated from your luggage during your journey, keep medication in your hand luggage or carry-on bag, together with a list of the medicines and dosage routines.
- If you or the person with dementia usually get motion sickness when travelling, ask a pharmacist to recommend helpful remedies. Make sure you tell the pharmacist if you are taking any other medication. It can also help to get some fresh air by taking breaks during the journey. See the NHS website [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) for more tips on dealing with motion sickness.
- Try to get a letter from the doctor in case you or the person you care for need to get more medicine when you are away. This could be helpful if you lose or run out of medicine on holiday.
- If any medication needs to be refrigerated during a journey, tell the travel company in advance. You should also make sure you will have access to a fridge where you are staying.

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## Liquids

- If you are travelling by plane, you cannot take liquids, gels and aerosols in your carry-on bag in containers larger than 100ml. All containers must fit comfortably in one transparent, re-sealable bag no larger than 20cm x 20cm (for example, a freezer bag). This includes toiletries, cosmetics and toothpastes. The only exception to this rule is essential medicine.
- If you need to take larger containers of liquids, pack these in your hold luggage.

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### Travel insurance

- You should make sure that you and the person with dementia are insured against any problems that may arise, such as sickness, accidents or lost items. Some policies do not cover people for a ‘pre-existing medical condition’. This could mean that any illness or accident linked to a person’s dementia may not be covered. Policies without this clause can be more expensive, so it is a good idea to look at a few different choices.
- If you think that an insurance quote is unreasonable you may have the right to challenge it – see ‘Knowing your rights’ on page 21.
- There are a number of specialist insurers that cater for people with additional needs, including dementia. You can find a directory of specialist insurers on the Money Helper website – see ‘Other useful organisations’ on page 21 for more details.

**You or the person with dementia may have a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). Despite the UK leaving the European Union (EU), an EHIC will still be valid for travel within the EU until the expiry date printed on it.**

**If your EHIC expires or if you don’t have one, you can apply for a UK Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC). Both cards provide some state-provided medical cover in the EU, but this will be different depending on the country you are visiting. You may need to buy private cover as well. Check what cover the cards provide on the government website [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).**

## 5 The journey

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People with dementia can have difficulties with planning and remembering the details of the journey ahead. This can put additional pressure on those travelling with them. The following tips may help with this:

- If you're travelling by car and you're likely to be on the road for a while, think of ways to make the journey an interesting part of the holiday. For example, you could stop to have nice food or visit interesting places on the way.
- Plan for toilet breaks during the journey. If you are travelling by car, check the route for stops that have accessible toilets.
- If you have to travel to an airport or railway station, give yourself enough time to get there early. This will make the journey less stressful for you and for the person you care for. Arriving earlier also means shorter queues or waiting times, which may make your journey easier.
- Busy places can be more confusing for people with dementia. You might want to consider travelling at times when fewer people travel – avoiding weekends at the height of summer, for example.
- Stations and airports can be confusing places. It can be easy to get lost or to lose touch with someone. If you are travelling with someone with dementia, always make a note of what they are wearing and carry a recent photograph of them. If you have their permission, you could also take a photo of the person each morning that you're on holiday – this could help if any problems arise on that day.
- In the UK, a range of places including airports and railway stations now use a sunflower lanyard scheme for people with hidden disabilities. This is a way of discreetly signalling to staff that assistance may be needed. Some airports, railway stations and large supermarkets now offer these lanyards for free. You can also buy one from the Hidden Disabilities store – see 'Other useful organisations' on page 22 for more details.
- If you need help, look for people who are wearing official uniforms (for example, security staff, airline counter staff or train conductors). For more information on the support that travel services must provide, see 'Knowing your rights' on page 21.

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## Different types of transport

Depending on the way you choose to travel and the specific needs of the person with dementia, there are ways to support them.

### Travelling by air

- If you are flying, you may need to tell the airline that your travelling companion has dementia. Most airlines say that people with a stable condition do not require medical clearance in order to fly. However, you should check what medical information the airline needs when you are booking your flights.
- Before booking, think about what help the different airlines can give you and check whether the cost of any assistance is included in the price of your ticket. Many airlines can offer support from your arrival at the airport. For example, they may be able to accompany you from the car park, train station or taxi stand if you set this up in advance.
- If the airline cannot help, the airport may be able to. Many airports can give information about the facilities they offer. This includes information for people with different needs. Contact the airport or visit their website to find out more.
- If you have luggage to check in, it may be a good idea to do that as soon as you arrive at the airport. Once you are checked in and through airport security, you can relax inside the terminal.
- Priority boarding is often offered for people with disabilities – this would include people living with dementia. Check this with the airline or with airport staff.
- When booking plane tickets, make sure that you are seated next to the person you care for. Some airlines charge for seat allocations but they may be able to arrange for you and the person to sit together for free. Let the airline know about the person's needs when you book.
- If the person is likely to walk about, you could ask airline staff if you can sit in the aisle seat, so that you're aware if the person needs or wants to get out of their seat.
- Some people with dementia may find noise-cancelling headphones and familiar music calming if travelling by plane is unsettling.
- It could be helpful to have some favourite snacks in your hand luggage in case of long waits or as a distraction on the flight.
- If you or the person you care for use a wheelchair, check the airline's policy on this. They may need you to transfer to an airline wheelchair when you check in.

- If your flight is cancelled and you or the person with dementia needs some rest, ask the airline to help arrange this for you. This is a good reason to tell the airline of any medical conditions before you travel.
- You should pack some essentials in your carry-on bag, in case your flight is delayed or your luggage is late arriving. Take the belongings you both need to feel comfortable (such as a change of underwear or a toothbrush) along with any medication that you might need. For more advice on packing see the section ‘Preparing and packing’ on page 9.

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### Travelling by coach or train

- If you are travelling by coach or train, a member of staff should be able to help with carrying and loading your luggage into the storage area or baggage racks. You should keep all valuables, tickets and medication with you in a separate bag.
- Many coach and rail companies run their own services for travellers who need extra support. This may include meeting you at the station in advance, or helping you find connecting trains or coaches. They can also provide ramps or help you to carry luggage. This can be set up during or after booking, as long as it is several days before the journey. Contact the company you are travelling with to find out what they offer. Make sure to arrange assistance for the return journey as well, if you will need it.
- It’s worth noting that coaches sometimes have a toilet that is difficult to access for people with mobility issues. Check what toilet facilities are available with the company ahead of time as it may mean that you have to use different transport.
- A number of specialist companies offer UK and European coach travel with fully accessible vehicles for people who use a wheelchair. For more information contact Tourism for All (see ‘Other useful organisations’ on page 22).

### Travelling by boat or ship

- If you are travelling by boat or ship, check with the operator whether you need to get medical clearance for the journey. Tell them when you book your ticket what assistance you will need.
- When on board, make sure the person has their cabin number on them at all times.
- For some people with dementia, a tour on a cruise ship can be a good option as the longer stay allows time to work out a daily routine. See ‘Tips for settling in’ on page 17 for more advice on this.

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- Cruise ships also offer activities and entertainment as part of the experience. If the ship stops at different locations and allows passengers to leave and return, such a trip could also allow you to travel more widely without having to go on multiple separate journeys. You may be able to find cruise ships that are more inclusive for people living with dementia.
- If you are booking a cruise, you should ask how accessible the ship is. Some cruise ships are very large and can be disorientating. It could be worth booking on a smaller ship if you think this will make it easier for you and the person with dementia.

### Travelling by car

- Travelling by car may be a good option for people living with dementia as it allows for more flexibility, such as being able to travel with more luggage. You can also stop for breaks when needed and plan the most suitable route for you and the person with dementia.
- If you are planning a long car journey, try not to travel for too long before having a break. Plan your journey carefully, factoring in regular breaks from driving. Listen to traffic updates before you set off. Try to ensure that everyone is comfortable and that seatbelts are properly fitted.
- If the person with dementia dislikes travelling by car, consider whether some familiar background music or an audiobook may help them to settle. If they are upset by the noise from traffic, try to travel at times when the roads will be less busy or use quieter routes.
- If you have safety concerns about the person with dementia becoming agitated when you are driving, you could ask another person to come with you and sit with them.
- You may be worried that the person with dementia will do something unsafe, such as open the car doors or unbuckle their seatbelt when you are driving. If this is the case, you could consider using the safety locks in the back seat or covering the buckle on their seatbelt to make it less visible. You should only do this if the person consents to it. If they do not have the mental capacity to consent, only do this if it is in the person's best interests.
- If you are planning to stop at motorway service areas, be aware that these can be big and confusing and it is easy to get lost or separated from travelling companions. It could help to give the person with dementia a note of the model, colour and registration number of the car that they can keep with them (a clear photograph would also work). Stay together where possible.

# 6 During the holiday

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Once you arrive at the holiday destination, allow yourself time to recover from the journey and settle into the accommodation and new surroundings.

## Tips for settling in

It may take the person with dementia a little while to get used to their new environment, as they might find it strange or frightening to be in a place they don't know. The following tips can help you both feel more comfortable when you arrive:

- If you are busy getting things organised, give the person a simple task to engage and include them, such as making a drink or hanging clothes in a wardrobe.
- If the person with dementia seems unsettled or tired, it may help to have a warm drink, relax and leave the unpacking until later.
- Where possible, keep to the routine you have at home. For example, have meals at the same time as you normally would, and keep to the same bedtime. For more information see 'Keeping aspects of routine on holiday' on page 4.
- Place any personal and familiar items in places that are easy for the person with dementia to see. This can help them feel more relaxed and settled in their new surroundings.
- If the person with dementia has difficulties with continence or using the toilet, ask for a mattress protector and extra sheets to be left in the bedroom in case of accidents. If it's possible, it may be easier to take a mattress protector with you.
- Consider the layout of where you are staying and think about ways to help the person get around. You could put up signs that make it clear what each room is. Alzheimer's Society's online shop sells reusable signs to help people living with dementia get around safely – see [shop.alzheimers.org.uk](http://shop.alzheimers.org.uk)
- People with dementia can easily become disorientated in unfamiliar places, especially if they are alone. For example, they may get lost on the way back from the toilet and begin to panic. If it's possible, stay in a room with a connected bathroom and keep the bathroom door open when not in use. This will help the person to know where the toilet is at all times.
- If the place you are staying in has room numbers, make a note of your room number for the person to keep with them at all times. If it isn't possible for them to carry the note with them, consider writing the room number on the person's wrist. This can act as a reminder in case the person becomes disorientated or lost.

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- There are various pieces of assistive technology that can help someone in an unfamiliar environment, or alert you if the person with dementia is in danger. You should talk to an occupational therapist before your trip if you think any of these could be useful. For more information see factsheet 437, **Using technology to help with everyday life**.

### Making the most of the holiday

**Find activities that you both enjoy to have a meaningful and relaxing break. You can also take photos and keep a holiday diary to help the person remember things you have done together when you are back home. For more on adapting activities to suit a person living with dementia see booklet 77AC, The activities handbook.**

## 7 Returning home

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When you return home from a holiday, it may take a little time to settle back into your normal routine. It may be a relief to be home again in a familiar setting – or perhaps you would have liked to stay away for longer.

In some cases, holidays can help to improve the confidence of people with dementia. Perhaps you both tried new experiences and activities. If this is the case, you could look into what is available locally that can allow you to continue with these activities. Use Alzheimer's Society's dementia directory to find groups or services in your local area – see [alzheimers.org.uk/find-support-near-you](http://alzheimers.org.uk/find-support-near-you) for more information. You could also continue the holiday feeling by organising a day trip – see 'Day trips' on page 8 for more information.

If the holiday was not as relaxing as you would have hoped, you may feel like you need more support in your caring role going forward. Anyone who cares for a person with dementia is entitled to an assessment of their own needs as a carer by the local authority. This will give you an opportunity to discuss what breaks you are able to have from caring. In some cases, social services are able to put support in place so you can have a break. For more information see factsheets **418 Assessment for care and support** (for England), **W418** (for Wales), and **NI418** (for Northern Ireland).

If the person with dementia was behaving differently on holiday, or if you are concerned about changes in their behaviour now that you have returned, contact their GP. It may just be that the person needs some time in a familiar environment to settle in. However, it is always reassuring to rule out any medical reason for the change.

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## 8 Financial assistance

If you are caring for someone with dementia and you are having difficulty finding the money for a holiday, a charity may be able to help.

The Turn2us website has a free grants search tool that lets you look for grants based on your circumstances and needs. The Disability Grants website lists the grants that are available by category, so you can search for grants specifically for holidays. For more details see 'Other useful organisations' on page 22.

Some travel operators offer discounts or passes for people with disabilities and people over a certain age. Tourist sites may also offer free or discounted tickets if you accompany someone as their carer. It's worth contacting them beforehand to see what they can offer.

If you would like to know more about funding for respite care, contact your local authority social services department. There is more information on this in factsheets 462, **Respite care in England**, W462 (Wales) or NI462 (Northern Ireland).

## 9 Knowing your rights

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There are laws in the UK that protect the rights of people who have disabilities. It can be helpful to know about these when taking a holiday.

Under the Equality Act 2010 in England and Wales, and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in Northern Ireland, most UK businesses have to make ‘reasonable adjustments’ to make their services accessible to disabled people. This includes travel agents, train or coach companies and hotels. Dementia is classed as a disability for the purposes of these laws, even though many people with dementia would not see themselves as disabled.

Examples of ‘reasonable adjustments’ include removing steps from entrances or helping someone get off a train at the correct station and waiting with them until others arrive.

What is considered ‘reasonable’ will depend on the situation. These laws also state that service providers are not allowed to treat a disabled person less favourably than someone without a disability.

Most travel companies will try to meet the needs of their passengers with disabilities. It is always worth contacting the companies before you travel. Make a list of your specific requirements and ask how they can help you with each of them.

If you are having problems accessing services, or you are being treated unfairly, you should speak to the company directly. If the problem is not resolved, consider putting in a complaint about the treatment that you have received. You can get help about your rights from the Equality Advisory and Support Service (in England and Wales) and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (see ‘Other useful organisations’ on page 22 for details).

If an insurance company refuses to insure the person or quotes a higher premium because the person has dementia, that company needs to make a reasonable risk assessment. You can ask them to explain their decision. If they don’t, you can make a complaint to them or to the Financial Ombudsman (see ‘Other useful organisations’ on page 22).

These laws only cover the UK, which means that only services within the UK have to follow them. For this reason, there can be less protection on ships and airplanes. However, there are laws in the European Union and elsewhere that may offer similar protection.

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## Other useful organisations

**Civil Aviation Authority**  
**0330 022 1500**  
**[www.caa.co.uk](http://www.caa.co.uk)**

The Civil Aviation Authority provides information about air travel for passengers who need assistance.

**Dementia Adventure**  
**01245 237548 (Helpline 9am–5.30pm Monday–Friday)**  
**[info@dementiaadventure.co.uk](mailto:info@dementiaadventure.co.uk)**  
**[www.dementiaadventure.org](http://www.dementiaadventure.org)**

Dementia Adventure is a charity that organises short breaks and holidays for people living with dementia and their carers.

**Disability Grants**  
**[www.disability-grants.org](http://www.disability-grants.org)**

Disability Grants lists charities and trusts who provide grants for people with disabilities in the UK. This includes people living with dementia.

**Equality Advisory and Support Service**  
**0808 800 0082 (Helpline 9am–7pm Monday–Friday 10am–2pm Saturday)**  
**[www.equalityadvisoryservice.com](http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com)**

The Equality Advisory and Support Service advises people on issues relating to equality and human rights in England and Wales. Contact them if you think you have been treated unfairly and want further advice.

**Equality Commission for Northern Ireland**  
**028 9050 0600**  
**[information@equalityni.org](mailto:information@equalityni.org)**  
**[www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)**

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland is a public body that provides protection against discrimination. They can provide advice and assistance if you feel you have been discriminated against.

**Euan's Guide**  
**[hello@euansguide.com](mailto:hello@euansguide.com)**  
**[www.euansguide.com](http://www.euansguide.com)**

Euan's Guide is a website where people with disabilities can find and share reviews of the accessibility of venues in the UK and abroad.

**Financial Ombudsman Service**

**0800 023 4567 (Helpline 8am–5pm Monday–Friday, 9am–1pm Saturday)**

**[www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk)**

The Financial Ombudsman Service deals with complaints about financial businesses, such as insurance companies.

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**Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Scheme**

**[www.hdsunflower.com](http://www.hdsunflower.com)**

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Scheme allows people living with hidden disabilities to discreetly signal that they may need further support when out in the community. You can buy a sunflower lanyard from the shop on their website.

**MedicAlert**

**01908 951045**

**[info@medicalert.org.uk](mailto:info@medicalert.org.uk)**

**[www.medicalert.org.uk](http://www.medicalert.org.uk)**

MedicAlert provide services and jewellery to help ensure someone's wishes are followed, if they are unable to communicate in an emergency situation.

**Money Helper**

**[www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en](http://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en)**

Money Helper (previously The Money Advice Service) provides free advice about a range of financial matters. It has a directory to help you find travel insurance if you have a medical condition – go to [www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/everyday-money/insurance/travel-insurance-directory](http://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/everyday-money/insurance/travel-insurance-directory)

**The National Trust**

**0344 800 1895**

**[enquiries@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@nationaltrust.org.uk)**

**[www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)**

The National Trust is a charity and membership organisation for heritage conservation in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. There is a section on its website with ideas and suggestions for days out in the UK – go to [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/days-out](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/days-out) for more information.

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**Revitalise**  
**030 3303 0145**  
**[bookings@revitalise.org.uk](mailto:bookings@revitalise.org.uk)**  
**[www.revitalise.org.uk](http://www.revitalise.org.uk)**

Revitalise is a charity that provides breaks for people with disabilities (including people with dementia) and their carers.

**Tourism for All UK**  
**[www.tourismforall.org.uk](http://www.tourismforall.org.uk)**

Tourism for All UK is a charity that provides holiday and travel information service for disabled and older people and their carers. This includes people with mobility issues and people affected by dementia.

**Turn2Us**  
**0808 802 2000 (Helpline 9am–5pm Monday–Friday)**  
**[www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk)**

Turn2us is a charity that helps people in financial hardship to gain access to welfare benefits, charitable grants and support services. They have a benefits calculator and a grants search tool on their website. Their 'find an adviser' service matches you to sources of information and advice on a range of topics in your area – go to [advicefinder.turn2us.org.uk](http://advicefinder.turn2us.org.uk)



## Factsheet 474

Last reviewed: October 2021

Next review due: October 2024

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We are reviewing this publication. If you would like to give us any feedback, you can email us at [publications@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:publications@alzheimers.org.uk) or call us at 020 7423 7455

This factsheet has also been reviewed by people affected by dementia.

To give feedback on this factsheet, or for a list of sources, please email **[publications@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:publications@alzheimers.org.uk)**

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At Alzheimer's Society we're working towards a world where dementia no longer devastates lives. We do this by giving help to everyone who needs it today, and hope for everyone in the future.

We have more information on **Adjusting to life with dementia**.

For advice and support on this, or any other aspect of dementia, call us on **0333 150 3456** or visit [alzheimers.org.uk](http://alzheimers.org.uk)

Thanks to your donations, we're able to be a vital source of support and a powerful force for change for everyone living with dementia. Help us do even more, call **0330 333 0804** or visit [alzheimers.org.uk/donate](http://alzheimers.org.uk/donate)



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Together we are help & hope  
for everyone living with dementia