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Coping With Alzheimer's Behaviors: Wandering and Getting Lost

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Many people with [Alzheimer's disease](#) wander away from their home or caregiver. As the caregiver, you need to know how to limit wandering and prevent the person from becoming lost. This will help keep the person safe and give you greater peace of mind.

Tips to help keep a wandering person safe

If you are caring for a person who wanders, it is important to have safeguards in place so they can get back home. Try these tips:

- Make sure the person carries some kind of ID or wears a medical bracelet with their name and address, and your phone number.
- If you think the person might remove an ID bracelet, label their clothes with a name and phone number.
- Many GPS systems are available to track the person's location. These can be a good alternative or addition to a medical bracelet.&
- Let neighbors and the local police know that the person with Alzheimer's tends to wander.
- Keep a recent photograph or video of the person to help police if the person becomes lost.



Safe Return Programs

Consider enrolling the person in a safe return program, such as the [MedicAlert + Alzheimer's Association Safe and Found](#) service. You can call **800-432-5378** to find the program in your area. Note that this program is not affiliated with NIA, and there

Tips to prevent wandering

Below are some tips to help prevent the person with Alzheimer's from wandering away from home. While these changes can help prevent the person with Alzheimer's from wandering, it is also important to make sure that the safety measures in the section above are in place in case the person wanders and gets lost.

- Keep doors locked. Consider a keyed deadbolt, or add another lock placed up high or down low on the door. If the person can open a lock, you may need to get a new latch or lock. Keep the key nearby in case of emergency.
- Place STOP, DO NOT ENTER, or CLOSED signs on doors.
- Install a smart doorbell or alarm that chimes when a door is opened.
- Secure the yard with fencing and a locked gate.
- Install safety devices to limit how much windows can be opened.
- Keep shoes, keys, suitcases, coats, hats, and other signs of departure out of sight.
- Do not leave a person with Alzheimer's who has a history of wandering unattended.

Six Tips to Help Manage Behavior Changes in Alzheimer's Disease



You may also be interested in

- Learning how to [create a safer home for a person with Alzheimer's](#)
- Getting [caregiving tips for managing personality and behavior changes in Alzheimer's](#)
- Reading and sharing an infographic about [how to communicate with a person with Alzheimer's](#)

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For more information

NIA Alzheimer's and related Dementias Education and Referral (ADEAR) Center

800-438-4380

adear@nia.nih.gov

www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers

The NIA ADEAR Center offers information and free print publications about Alzheimer's and related dementias for families, caregivers, and health professionals. ADEAR Center staff answer telephone, email, and written requests and make referrals to local and national resources.

Alzheimers.gov

www.alzheimers.gov

Explore the Alzheimers.gov website for information and resources on Alzheimer's and related dementias from across the federal government.

Eldercare Locator

800-677-1116

eldercarelocator@USAgings.org

<https://eldercare.acl.gov>

Alzheimer's Association

800-272-3900

866-403-3073 (TTY)

info@alz.org

www.alz.org

Alzheimer's Foundation of America

866-232-8484

info@alzfdn.org

<https://alzfdn.org>

Family Caregiver Alliance

800-445-8106

info@caregiver.org

www.caregiver.org

This content is provided by the NIH National Institute on Aging (NIA). NIA scientists and other experts review this content to ensure it is accurate and up to date.

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