

Dealing with Increasing Caregiving Needs

Over time, people with dementia will need more care and supervision to help them stay healthy and safe.

Some strategies for creating a safe and supportive environment for a person with dementia include:

- Creating a predictable and stable routine
- Providing regular opportunities for rest and activity
- Arranging the environment to help the person do as much as they can while staying safe
- Providing enjoyable activities that match the person's current strengths, interests, and abilities
- Learning when and how to ask others for help as needed

When to Seek Outside Help

It can be hard to know when it's the right time to look for more help. Sometimes an event will occur that makes this decision more clear. For instance, the person with dementia may become lost, get injured, or end up in the hospital. Or maybe something happens to the caregiver themselves, like a decline in their own health. Though these events are often stressful, they can also be an opportunity to make changes that provide more support for both the person living with dementia and the caregiver.

Here are some signs that the person living with dementia may need more help or supervision:

- They get anxious when left alone
- They make mistakes with their medications
- They are unsafe when cooking, using tools, or appliances
- They neglect their appearance or resist personal hygiene, such as not showering, wearing soiled clothing, or poor oral care
- They lose weight because they forget to eat, they are no longer able to prepare food for themselves, or they cannot shop for groceries on their own
- They have difficulty getting around on their own without getting lost or falling
- They make mistakes with money such as spending more money than they have in their bank account or getting late notices for forgetting to pay bills
- They are drinking alcohol or smoking in an unsafe manner

Here are some signs that you, as a caregiver, may need more help:

- You can't find the time or energy to take care of your own health and wellbeing
- You have difficulty concentrating on what you are doing

- You feel stressed and irritable, or have said or done things that you regret
- The person with dementia needs more physical care than you are able to provide without injuring yourself
- The level of anxiety or distress that you are experiencing is unsafe or unmanageable

Since every situation is different, we cannot tell you what is right for you; however, we can help you better understand your options.

Here are some things for you to consider:

- Are there people who might be willing and able to provide free support? Consider neighbors, family or friends, or volunteers from a local church/community organization.
- Can you get help with routine tasks? For example, having groceries or meals delivered, setting up automatic bill pay, or hiring someone to help with housekeeping or home maintenance.
- Is there an adult day center nearby that would be a good match for the person living with dementia? This is often one of the more affordable respite care options, if they are available in your community.
- Can you arrange for in-home care? In-home care generally costs \$20 or more per hour depending on where you live and the level of care the person needs (supervision, companionship, assistance with personal care, etc.).
- Does the person with dementia have or qualify for any benefits that might help pay for long-term care? Examples include long-term care insurance, Veterans benefits, hospice, Medicaid, or respite grants from organizations such as the Alzheimer's Association and Family Caregiver Alliance.
- Are there other living arrangements that might be a better fit for the person with dementia?

Please contact your Care Team Navigator to talk about your situation, your options, or to learn more about any of the resources mentioned above.

Additional Information:

Next Steps in Care: What do I need as a Family Caregiver?

http://www.nextstepincare.org/uploads/File/Guides/Caregiver_Self-Assessment/What_Do_I_Need.pdf