Daily Routines for a Person with Dementia

Daily routines are helpful for those living with dementia, even if they didn't have a daily routine before. This helps them know what to expect throughout the day. This helps promote independence with tasks while ensuring help is available. This can reduce stress and worry for everyone involved.

Routines can be made for the entire day or just for certain tasks. Some examples include bathing or eating.

The following are tips for planning a daily routine for a person living with dementia. Some or all the tips might be helpful for you and your loved one.

Tips for Planning a Daily Routine

- Let the person do as much as they can. This helps them feel in control.
- **Do not** rush the person. This can increase feelings of stress and anxiety for the person.
- Provide simple choices, when able. Limit the number of choices to just a couple. Do not overwhelm the person.
- Break tasks down into simple steps. Give one step directions, in simple words.
- Incorporate previous hobbies and interests into the daily routine. For instance, if they were a musician, they may enjoy listening to music. A person who can no longer use a washing machine may still enjoy folding laundry.
- People with dementia can tire quickly. Provide ample rest times throughout the day.

Share information about your loved one's daily routines with staff at new facilities such as the hospital or nursing home. This will help ease the transition to the new facility.

Tips for Managing Common Daily Routines

Eating

- Encourage frequent small meals and snacks.
- Provide favorite snacks and beverages to encourage eating and drinking.
- Help with feeding as needed. Some patients might do better with finger foods, rather than using utensils.
- Have them help with making a meal if they would like to.

Dressing

- Keep favorite outfits the person would have previously worn.
- Offer comfortable clothes that are easy to get on and off. This can help the person dress themselves.
- Offer comfortable shoes that are non-slip to reduce the person's risk of falling.

Personal Cares (Bathing, Grooming, and Toileting)

- Let the person do as much as they can. Let them feel in control.
- Do things along with the person like brushing teeth and combing hair.
- Keep personal care routines the same. For instance, if the person previously showered in the morning, continue to offer showers in the morning.

- Use a water temperature that is safe and comfortable for the person.
- Provide visual cues for the bathroom. Use a sign on the door or keep it open.
- Encourage the person to visit the bathroom often.

Resources
The Alzheimer's Association
1-800-272-3900 or www.alz.org.

To find out more about aging and living with disabilities, as well as caregiver resources, find your local Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) locations here: https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/adrc/index.htm.

To find resources in other areas, Elder Locator can be helpful: **1-800-677-1116** or https://eldercare.acl.gov/

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 10/2024. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#5264