

Daily Routines for a Person with Dementia

A person with dementia may need help with their daily routines. It may be hard for them to accept help. Needing help can make them feel like they are losing their freedom. It can also be hard for the caregiver to help with tasks that are usually private. Knowing the tasks, a person can do safely and the ones they need help with is hard. For help, talk to a health care provider.

Tips when Planning Daily Routines

- Set a routine. This helps with less stress and worry.
- Do not rush the person. It can make them more confused.
- Break the task down into simple steps. Give one step directions, in simple words.
- People with dementia are very aware of the moods of others. Try to remain calm and patient.
- People with dementia can tire quickly. Rotate busy times with rest.
- Allow the person to make choices when able. Limit the number of options so there is less pressure on them.
- Use clocks and calendars so they know date and time.
- Think of things your loved one enjoys and keep them involved. 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.
- Repeating the same act may be soothing for the person. For example, stacking items like the mail, or moving small things from one place to another.

- Make sure staff knows of routines if the person goes to the hospital.

Managing Daily Routines

Eating

- Make sure they are eating healthy and drinking enough water. Encourage frequent small meals and snacks.
- Keep food choices simple by offering one or two choices.
- Help with feeding as needing. Have finger foods, if fitting.
- Have them help with making a meal if they would like to.

Dressing

- Have simple choices. Keep favorite outfits and colors.
- Offer comfortable clothes that are easy to get on and off.
- Have comfortable shoes that are non-slip.

Bathing

- Let the person do as much as they can. Let them feel in control.
- Use a water temperature that is safe and comfortable for the person.
- Try to keep bathing a routine.

Grooming

- Keep routines that the person has had.
- Do things along with the person like brushing teeth and combing hair.

Toileting

- Provide visual cues for the bathroom. Use a sign on the door or keep it open.
- Toilet often.
- Limit fluids after 6 pm.

Medicines

- Use a pill box organizer. Keep a routine for giving medicines.

Cleaning

- Reduce clutter in the home and keep tasks simple.

Adult day centers are a good way for a person with dementia to have social time. They match tasks to the person's skills and provide a sense of self-worth. They also give the caregiver a break. The Benefit Specialist for your County Aging Unit or Area Agency on Aging, community social workers, and others who work within the aging system can provide more details about adult day centers.

Resources

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

Alzheimer's & Dementia Alliance of WI
1-888-308-6251 or www.alzwisc.org

To find resources in other areas, Elder Locator can be helpful.
1-800-677-1116 or www.eldercare.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 © 8/2020. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#5264