



Tips for Understanding and Coping with the Everyday Challenges of Your Loved One with Memory Loss

In the **Mayo Clinic** article, “**Alzheimer's: Dealing with Daily Challenges**”, their medical professionals review the primary challenges of loved ones with memory loss and offer useful advice for caregivers.

Bathing – Bathing can be a confusing, even frightening, experience for a person with Alzheimer's. Having a plan can help make the experience better for both of you.

- **Establish a routine** – Some people like showers, while others prefer tub baths. Time of day is often important as well.
- **Keep them comfortable** – Make sure the bathroom is warm and keep towels or bath blankets handy.
- **Respect their privacy** – If your loved one is self-conscious, provide a towel for cover when they get in and out of the shower or tub.
- **Remain flexible** – If daily bathing is traumatic, alternate showers or tub baths with sponge baths.

Dressing – The physical and mental impairment of Alzheimer's can make dressing a frustrating experience.

- **Have a set schedule** – Help your loved one get dressed at the same time each day.
- **Limit clothing options** – Offer no more than two clothing options each morning. Empty their closets and drawers of rarely worn clothes that could complicate the decision.
- **Give direction and simplify** – Lay out clothing in the order they should be put on, or hand out clothing one piece at a time as you provide short, simple dressing instructions.
- **Have patience** – Rushing your loved one could cause stress and anxiety.
- **Be considerate of your loved one's preferences** – Don't argue if your loved one doesn't want to wear a particular item or chooses something you may not care for.

Eating – A person with Alzheimer's might not remember when they last ate, or why it is important to eat.

- **Eat at regularly scheduled times** – Don't rely on your loved one to ask for food – they might not respond to hunger or thirst.
- **Use white dishes** – Plain white dishes can make it easier for your loved one to distinguish the food from the plate.

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- **Offer foods one at a time** – If your loved one is overwhelmed by an entire plateful of food, place just one type of food at a time on the plate. You could also offer several small meals throughout the day.
- **Cut food into bite-sized portions** – Finger foods are even easier, but avoid foods that can be difficult to chew and swallow, such as nuts, popcorn and raw carrots.
- **Limit distractions** – Turn off the television, radio and telephone ringer and eliminate any other distractions during mealtimes.
- **Make meals an enjoyable social event** – Eat together so that your loved one looks forward to the experience.

Using the Bathroom – As Alzheimer's progresses, problems with incontinence often occur. Keep in mind that it is very important to help your loved one maintain their sense of dignity.

- **Make the bathroom easy to find** – Post a sign on the bathroom door that says "Toilet," or post a picture of a toilet. Use night-lights to help your loved one find their way to the bathroom at night.
- **Be alert for telltale signs** – Restlessness or tugging on clothing might signal the need to use the bathroom.
- **Create a schedule** – Plan bathroom breaks every few hours, before and after meals, and before bedtime. Do not wait for your loved one to ask.
- **Make clothing "bathroom friendly"** – Replace zippers and buttons with fabric fasteners and use pants with elastic waistbands.
- **Be patient** – Accidents do happen! Praise their successes and offer reassurance when accidents happen.

North Woods Village at Edison Lakes is the area's first single-purpose residential [Memory Care Assisted Living Community](#) (MCAL) dedicated to caring for those with Alzheimer's disease, dementia and other memory impairments as well as providing education, support and resources to area caregivers and their families. The unique, [purpose-built architectural design](#) of **North Woods Village at Edison Lakes** is one element of "[NEW DIRECTIONSSM](#)" the community's signature memory care program that provides the optimal balance of loving care, dignified support, social engagement, wellness and independence.

For more information on **North Woods Village at Edison Lakes** and our [Caregiver Education & Support Calendar](#), please [contact us](#) today!

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