

# Home Safety Tips for Dementia Caregivers

Providing care for a loved one can be fulfilling as well as stressful. This is especially true if your loved one has [Alzheimer's or another type of dementia](#). One way you can reduce stress is by taking steps to make their home safer. People with dementia may experience confusion or agitation. Reducing triggers for these symptoms can make your loved one feel more secure. As they are able to do less, pay attention to what they still *can* do. Break tasks into steps, and let them continue to do what they can.

Ensure your loved one's safety by following these tips for dementia caregivers.

## Create Easy-to-Navigate Paths

- **Create a "wander loop."** This is an open, clear path that allows people with dementia to walk around their homes safely.
- **Keep walkways clear.** Remove clutter from hallways, entrances, and other paths.
- **Make the home accessible.** If your loved one uses a wheelchair, walker, or power scooter, ensure that there are wheelchair ramps in addition to stairs.

## Adjust Home Lighting

- **Install night lights.** Adequate lighting is crucial for your loved one's safety, especially if they often get up in the night.
- **Minimize shadows.** Keep the home well lit.

# Keep the Bathroom Safe

- **Use reflective tape.** Marking the path to the bathroom (and the toilet) makes it easier for your loved one to find their way.
- **Install grab bars.** Grab bars make it easier for your loved one to get off the toilet and help keep them from slipping in the shower. Installing a shower chair or a nonslip mat also helps.
- **Monitor use of personal care items.** As your loved one's dementia advances, tools such as hair dryers and razors may become dangerous. Watch for small cuts or burns on their face and neck.
- **Remove locks.** If your loved one falls or has some other type of accident, you'll be able to get to them quickly.

# Implement Home Fire Safety Measures

- **Monitor heating pads.** Consider using or switching to heating pads that shut off automatically.
- **Double-check appliances.** Appliances that generate heat (such as stoves, radiators, toasters, and coffee makers) should be turned off when not in use. Cover electrical outlets too.
- **Inspect electrical cords.** Check cords for fraying or other damage. Secure them near baseboards and out of pathways, to keep people from tripping. Note that hiding cords under rugs is a fire hazard.

# Secure Certain Areas in the Home

- **Lock garages and basements.** Protect your loved one from accessing these areas unsupervised.

- **Properly store hazardous items.** Sharp objects, medications, toxic chemicals, and liquor should be locked in their proper cabinets.
- **Install safety locks.** Locks or alarms on doors, windows, and gates prevent your loved one from wandering.
- **Put away car keys.** Store your loved one's car keys in a locked container.

## Prevent Mental Confusion

- **Reduce glare.** Cover objects that might produce glare.  
**Tip:** Spend time in or near your loved one's favorite chair at different times of the year. Sunlight can shift from one season to another and hit surfaces at different angles.
- **Cover mirrors.** Consider covering or removing wall mirrors from the home.
- **Get an ID bracelet.** Ensure that your loved one wears an ID bracelet.

## Work with Dementia or Home Care Specialists

- **Home health aides.** [A home health aide](#) is trained to care for people with Alzheimer's or other types of dementia. Aides are supervised by a [home care nurse](#).
- **Health monitoring.** Monitor your loved one's condition, alongside their nurse or doctor.

Understanding where to begin can be daunting. Thankfully, these caregiver tips can drastically improve your loved one's care and your own well-being.