



**FACT SHEET 3**

**Commonly asked Questions by Family Member of an  
 Older Adult Diagnosed with Alzheimer’s Disease –AD**

*Patient Self Management Resources*

QUESTION	ANSWER	AUTHORITATIVE PRINT & WEB RESOURCE CONTACT INFORMATION
<p><b>What should I expect now that my family member has AD?</b></p>	<p>AD is a chronic illness that can go on for many years. The usual time from diagnosis of AD until death is between 8 and 12 years.</p>	
	<p>The Alzheimer’s Association is the best place to go for information and services. They have national and local offices, support groups, a 24 hour hot line, and many on-line, web resources.</p>	<p>Google your local Alzheimer’s Association chapter or contact the national office &amp; 24 hour helpline: 800 272-3900; <a href="http://www.alz.org">www.alz.org</a></p>
	<p>The Alzheimer’s Association has booklets, e.g. “I’ve received a diagnosis of AD- Now what?” &amp; “If you have AD” that have helpful information.</p>	<p>Alzheimer’s Association Publications  <a href="http://www.alz.org/alzheimers_disease_publications.asp">http://www.alz.org/alzheimers_disease_publications.asp</a></p>
	<p>The National Institute on Aging (NIH) has a Alzheimer’s Disease Education &amp; Referral Center for families with many helpful resources, including the signs a person will have in each stage of AD.</p>	<p>Google NIH Alzheimer’s Disease Education &amp; Referral Center or go to:  <a href="http://www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers/topics">http://www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers/topics</a></p>
	<p>The NIH publication “Age Page” has helpful information.</p>	<p>Google NIH Age Pages, or go to:  <a href="http://newcart.niapublications.org/">http://newcart.niapublications.org/</a></p>
<p><b>Where can I get help for a family member with AD who cannot manage things like shopping, banking, and visits to doctors?</b></p>	<p>Your primary care doctor or nurse practitioner can tell you where to go for help.</p>	<p>Google your local Alzheimer’s Association chapter or contact the national office &amp; 24 hour helpline: 800 272-3900; <a href="http://www.alz.org">www.alz.org</a></p>
	<p>Your local Alzheimer’s Association can suggest places to go for help. Local church or synagogue may have help, such as friendly visitor services.</p>	<p>The <a href="http://www.caremanager.org">National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers   GCM</a> is the care managers professional organization  <a href="http://www.caremanager.org">www.caremanager.org</a></p>
	<p>A geriatric care manager can find help. These services are not covered by insurance.</p>	
<p><b>Where can I get help for a family member with AD who is not able to dress, bathe, make meals, or toilet themselves?</b></p>	<p>Ask your primary care doctor or nurse practitioner can tell you where to go for help.</p>	
	<p>Your local hospital home care office can help you find a home care agency with home attendants and also physical therapists who can advise on grab bars, walkers, etc. These services may be covered by insurance.</p>	<p>Google your local hospital and ask for the home care office or a care manager</p>

Face Sheet 3- Commonly Asked Questions about Alzheimer’s Disease

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	<p>Your local Alzheimer’s Association can help you find health care attendants who work with people with AD.</p>	<p>Google your local Alzheimer’s Association chapter or contact the national office &amp; 24 hour helpline: 800 272-3900; <a href="http://www.alz.org">www.alz.org</a></p>
	<p>The Family Caregiving Alliance has Tip Sheets to help with these issues.</p>	<p>Family Caregiving Alliance <a href="http://www.caregiver.org">www.caregiver.org</a></p>
<p><b>How do I keep my family member with AD safe when he/she cannot use a telephone to call for help and/or wanders?</b></p>	<p>60% of people with AD will get lost at some point.</p> <p>The Alzheimer’s Association Comfort Zone program, that includes MedicAlert and Safe Return, can help people with AD who may get lost. These are not free but local Alzheimer Association chapters may be able to pay for these services.</p>	<p>Google your local Alzheimer’s Association chapter or contact the national office &amp; 24 hour helpline: 800 272-3900; <a href="http://www.alz.org">www.alz.org</a></p>
	<p>The Alzheimer’s Association booklet “Staying Safe: Steps to Take for a Person with AD” can be helpful.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.alz.org/alzheimers_disease_publications_safety.asp">http://www.alz.org/alzheimers_disease_publications_safety.asp</a></p>
<p><b>What do I need to know about the medicines my family member takes to treat AD?</b></p>	<p>Medicines may help your family member with AD have better memory and be better able to manage. These medicines do not cure AD or stop it from getting worse.</p> <p>Your doctor or nurse practitioner should tell you what to watch for about these medicines. They will stop the medicine if it is not helping your family member.</p>	
<p><b>Where can I get help when my family member with AD acts “strange,” for example acts out in public, yells at people, hits and bites, is moody, will not talk and seems depressed, or hears voices?</b></p>	<p>Your local Alzheimer’s Association has support groups for people with early AD. They may know social workers or others who can teach you how to manage these behaviors.</p> <p>Your primary care doctor or nurse practitioner can check to be sure that things like an infection are not the reason for these behaviors. Also, they can use medicines to help control these behaviors.</p> <p>Federally funded Aging and Dementia Centers can review these behaviors and suggest research studies that are trying to better manage these behaviors.</p>	<p>Google your local Alzheimer’s Association chapter for a referral or contact the national office &amp; 24 hour helpline: 800 272-3900; <a href="http://www.alz.org">http://www.alz.org</a></p> <p>Alzheimer's Disease Research Centers <a href="http://www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers/alzheimers-disease-research-centers">http://www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers/alzheimers-disease-research-centers</a></p>
	<p>Adult Medical Day Care programs can help family members manage these behaviors and give family some respite.</p>	<p>Google to find adult medical day care in your area.</p>

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	Exercise programs and other activities can help prevent these behaviors.	Your local Alzheimer’s Association, YMCA or Area Agency on Aging can tell you about exercise programs
How do things like heart disease and diabetes affect my family member with AD?	It is important that your family member with AD still visit their doctor or nurse practitioner. Heart disease, diabetes, poor vision, hearing and dental problems can make AD worse.	Care Topic Publications <a href="http://www.alz.org/alzheimers_disease_publications_care_topics.asp">http://www.alz.org/alzheimers_disease_publications_care_topics.asp</a>
	People with AD also need to have a good diet. Loosing weight loss is common in AD; about 40% of people AD loose weight. The Alzheimer’s Association booklet: “Eating” can be helpful.”	
	Ask your primary care doctor or nurse practitioner to check for depression, which is common in people with AD.	
	The Alzheimer’s Association support groups are a good place to find local dentists, eye doctors and others who give good care to people with AD.	Google your local Alzheimer’s Association chapter or contact the national office and 24 hour helpline: 800 272-3900; <a href="http://www.alz.org">www.alz.org</a>
Where can I get help with my own needs and feelings about AD?	Taking care of your own health, diet, exercise and mental health is important to you and your family member with AD.	
	The Alzheimer’s Association has free support groups for family members and an on-line Alzheimer’s and Dementia Caregiver Center.	Google your local Alzheimer’s Association chapter or contact the national office, <a href="http://www.alz.org">www.alz.org</a>
	Alzheimer’s Association pamphlets: “Caregiver stress” & “Take care of Yourself” can be helpful.	<a href="http://www.alz.org/care/overview.asp">http://www.alz.org/care/overview.asp</a> <a href="http://www.alz.org/alzheimersdisease_publications_care_topics.asp">http://www.alz.org/alzheimersdisease_publications_care_topics.asp</a>
Where can I find out about what Medicare and other insurance cover for my family member with AD?	The local Alzheimer’s Association can help you find out about this.	Google your local Alzheimer’s Association chapter or contact the national office and 24 hour helpline: 800 272-3900; <a href="http://www.alz.org">www.alz.org</a>
	The Alzheimer’s Association booklet “Money Matters” can be helpful.	<a href="http://www.alz.org/alzheimers_disease_publications_financial_legal.asp">http://www.alz.org/alzheimers_disease_publications_financial_legal.asp</a>
	Your local Area Agency on Aging supports Senior Centers that may have experts on health insurance.	Google your local Area Agency on Aging or go to: National Association of Area Agencies on Aging; or go to <a href="http://www.n4a.org">www.n4a.org</a>
	Your local Medicare office can be helpful.	Google your local Medicare office
	Elder lawyers are expert in programs and insurance coverage in AD.	National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys. <a href="http://www.naela.org">www.naela.org</a>

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<p><b>What advance planning documents should I be sure to have for my family member with AD?</b></p>	<p>Health Care Proxies &amp; Living Wills are advance planning forms. You do not need a lawyer to fill out these documents.</p> <p>All states allow Health Care Proxies. In a Health Care Proxy, a person names someone, usually a family member to make health care decisions if they cannot do this for themselves. There are different types of Health Care Proxy documents:</p> <p>A plain Health Care Proxy Form</p> <p>Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST): A legal form signed by the patient, the proxy &amp; a doctor or nurse practitioner.</p> <p>Five Wishes Document: A mix of a living will and a health care proxy</p> <p>A Living Will: a form where a person writes down their health care choices. Doctors find health care proxies more helpful than living wills. Some banks provide these documents</p>	<p>Google health care proxy forms for your state.</p> <p>Google POLST in your state and Living Will documents.</p> <p>Sample POLST Form  <a href="http://www.oregonpolst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Printing-POLST.pdf">http://www.oregonpolst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Printing-POLST.pdf</a></p> <p>Aging with Dignity Website- Five Wishes Information  <a href="http://www.fivewishes@agingwithdignity.org">www.fivewishes@agingwithdignity.org</a></p>
	<p>The Alzheimer’s Association booklet “End-of-Life Decisions: Honoring the wishes of the person with AD” &amp; “Legal planning” can be helpful</p>	<p>Alzheimer’s Association Publications  <a href="http://www.alz.org/national/documents/brochure_endoflifedecisions.pdf">http://www.alz.org/national/documents/brochure_endoflifedecisions.pdf</a>  <a href="http://www.alz.org/national/documents/brochure_money_matters.pdf">http://www.alz.org/national/documents/brochure_money_matters.pdf</a></p>
	<p>The NIH Age Page “Getting Your Affairs in Order” can be helpful</p>	<p>NIH Publication  <a href="http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/publication/getting-your-affaires-order">www.nia.nih.gov/health/publication/getting-your-affaires-order</a></p>
	<p>Keep advance planning forms, contact and emergency numbers, and a list of medicines where they can be quickly found in the home of the person with AD</p>	

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<p><b>How will I know when it is not safe for my family member with AD to drive?</b></p>	<p>Your primary care doctor or nurse practitioner can ask questions and do tests to see if your family member is safe to drive.</p> <p>Tell you primary care doctor or nurse practitioner about accidents, tickets and near misses, or if you are not comfortable when your family member drives alone or with a young child in the car.</p> <p>Ask your doctor or nurse practitioner to suggest an Occupational Therapist who can do a driving evaluation.</p> <p>The Alzheimer’s Association has a Driving Assessment Page.</p>	<p>Driving Assessment  <a href="http://www.alz.org/georgia/in_my_community_16195.asp">http://www.alz.org/georgia/in_my_community_16195.asp</a></p>
<p><b>Where can I get information about fire arm safety for my family member with AD?</b></p>	<p>37% of older people live in a home where there is a firearm.</p> <p>People with AD should not be able get to a firearm so that they do not hurt themselves or others, or try to commit suicide.</p> <p>The Alzheimer’s Association has a page on safety in general that includes fire arm safety.</p>	<p>Safety and Right to Bear Arms  <a href="http://www.alz.org/cacentral/documents/14-safety_and_the_right_to_bear_arms.pdf">http://www.alz.org/cacentral/documents/14-safety_and_the_right_to_bear_arms.pdf</a></p>
<p><b>How worried should I be about elder abuse and neglect for my family member with AD?</b></p>	<p>People with AD are at risk of abuse and neglect by others and to themselves.</p> <p>To prevent abuse, select caregivers from reputable and licensed agencies.</p> <p>The Alzheimer’s Association can help you identify signs of physical, emotional and sexual abuse, neglect, confinement and financial abuse.</p> <p>Congress has passed a Elder Justice Act to help establish resources to guard against abuse</p>	<p>Elder Abuse Information  <a href="http://www.alz.org/care/alzheimers-dementia-elder-abuse.asp">www.alz.org/care/alzheimers-dementia-elder-abuse.asp</a></p> <p>Google elder justice or go to  <a href="http://www.apa.org/about/gr/issues/aging/elder-justice.pdf">www.apa.org/about/gr/issues/aging/elder-justice.pdf</a></p>

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