



A First Name Basis

The Trusted Face of In-Home Care

Coping Tips for Caregivers of Individuals with Alzheimer's Disease

Changes in Communication Skills:

- Use other methods besides speaking to help the person, such as gentle touching to guide him or her.
- Offer simple, step-by-step instructions, and repeat them as often needed.
- Instead of finding mistakes, say, "Let's try this way." Say, "Please do this," instead of "Don't do that."
- Limit the number of choices. For example, ask, "Would you like a hamburger or chicken for dinner?" instead of "What would you like for dinner?"
- Be careful not to put words in the person's mouth or "fill in the blanks" too quickly.

Rummaging and Hiding Things:

- Remove spoiled food from the refrigerator or pantry. Someone with Alzheimer's disease may look for snacks but lack the judgment or sense of taste to stay away from spoiled foods.
- Search the house to learn where the person often hides things. Once you find these places, check them often, out of sight of the individual.
- Check trash containers before you empty them, in case something has been hidden there or thrown away by accident.
- Create a special place where the person can rummage, hide, and sort things freely. This could be a chest of drawers, a box, or a basket. You may have to remind the person where to find his or her personal storage space.

Caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's Disease can take a physical and emotional toll on a person. For more information on how home care can help lighten your load and give you and your loved one both your lives back, call A First Name Basis. We're available to talk anytime – 24/7!



Wandering:

- Make sure the person carries some kind of ID or wears a medical bracelet.
- Consider enrolling the person in the Alzheimer's Association Safe Return Program (see www.alz.org or call 1-888-572-8566 to find your area program). Let neighbors and the local Police know that the person tends to wander.
- Keep doors locked. Consider a keyed deadbolt or another lock that cannot be opened by a person who will wander.
- Install an "announcing system" that chimes when the door opens.

Changes in Behavior:

- Keep things simple. Ask or say one thing at a time.
- Have a daily routine, so the person knows when certain things will happen.
- Don't argue or try to reason with the person.
- Try not to show your anger or frustration. If needed, leave the room for a minute or two.
- Try using music, singing, or another activity to distract the person. One caregiver found that giving her husband chewing gum stopped his cursing.
- Ask for the person's assistance in a task. Have them set the table, help match up pairs of socks, or put away groceries.

