

Planning ahead to make holidays calm and bright

The holidays are a time when family and friends often come together. But for families living with Alzheimer's and other dementias, the holidays can be challenging. With some planning and adjusted expectations, your celebrations can still be happy, memorable occasions.



In the early stage, a person with Alzheimer's may experience minor changes. Some may withdraw and be less comfortable socializing while others may relish seeing family and friends as before. The key is to check in with each other and discuss options. A simple and sincere "How are you doing" may be appreciated. Plan the holidays together, focusing on the things that bring happiness and letting go of activities that seem overwhelming or stressful.

For loved ones in the middle or late stages, consider rethinking holiday plans. Make sure visitors understand that changes in your loved one's behavior and memory are caused by the disease and help them understand how to most effectively connect and interact.

Involving the person with dementia

- Build on past traditions and memories. Focus on activities that are meaningful to the person with dementia. Your family member may find comfort in singing old holiday songs, watching favorite holiday movies, or looking through old photo albums.
- Involve the person in holiday preparation. As the person's abilities allow, invite him or her to help you prepare food, wrap packages, help decorate or set the table. This could be as simple as having the person measure an ingredient or hand decorations to you as you put them up. (Be careful with decoration choices. Blinking lights may confuse or scare a person with dementia, and decorations that look like food could be mistaken as edible.)
- Maintain a normal routine. Sticking to the person's normal routine will help keep the holidays from becoming disruptive or confusing. Plan time for breaks and rest. For more ideas, visit alz.org.

HONOR A CAREGIVER THIS NOVEMBER

National Family Caregiver Month

Help is available night or day through the Alzheimer's Association free 24/7 Helpline at 800-272-3900 or www.alz.org.

We are here 24/7.



YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

alzconnected.org

ALZConnected® is a free online community designed for people living with Alzheimer's and other dementias and their caregivers.

Members can connect and communicate with others who understand their experiences. They can pose questions and offer solutions to dementia-related issues, create public and private groups organized around a specific topic, and contribute to message boards. Visit alzconnected.org.

