

TRAVELLING WITH A PERSON WITH DEMENTIA

People enjoy travelling because of new experiences and an opportunity to break from routine. Early in the disease progression individuals may experience little difficulty and continue to enjoy traveling. As the disease progresses, changes in abilities may make it harder for the person to cope with change in surroundings and daily routines. Traveling with someone who has dementia requires thought and planning. The following are some tips to keep in mind to make the trip easier.

PLAN

- Include and prepare the person. If possible allow the person to help plan. Give the person a copy of the trip itinerary for their reference.
- Try to anticipate every detail and plan accordingly. Include a backup plan, should the person experience difficulties.
- Wandering is a possible risk. Register the person with MedicAlert® Safely Home® (Call 1-855-581-3794). It is a nationwide program designed to help identify the person who is lost and assist in a safe return home.
- Take recent photographs with you and take note of what the person is wearing. Carry a description of the person, the name they respond to and details of their preferred places of interest. (This will assist a search if one is necessary.)
- Keep a copy of the name and number of the hotel, in a familiar spot in the person's purse or pocket so they can ask for help if they get lost.
- If the anticipation of the trip causes the person to become anxious, wait until just shortly before you leave to tell them.

SIMPLIFY

- Try to get a direct flight.
- Consider alternative forms of traveling such as a cruise, which provides a relaxing, safe atmosphere.
- Take a few important items that might help reassure and orient the person in case they become anxious and confused during the travel (e.g., photos, a favorite quilt/blanket, a familiar book).

ASK FOR HELP

- If possible have someone travel with you to provide help.
- Inform the airlines that you are traveling with a person with dementia. You may want to request early boarding, a wheelchair or transportation upon arrival.
- Request seating near the rest rooms.

The Alzheimer Society of Manitoba's mission is to alleviate the individual, family and social consequences of Alzheimer's disease and related disorders while supporting the search for a cure.

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