

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Tips for people with dementia, caregivers and families

[Read our COVID-19 statement.](#)

The current situation with coronavirus (COVID-19) presents some unique challenges for people living with dementia and their caregivers and families. Social distancing, self-isolation and the associated changes in routine can lead to increased feelings of stress, anxiety and confusion for people with dementia, and can even make the person's dementia symptoms worse. Many people with dementia also depend on others to help with their daily needs, making social distancing a challenge for everyone involved.

To help navigate these challenges, we've compiled some helpful tips:

Tips for people with dementia who live alone

- **Have a plan for what you will do if you become unwell.** Make a list of important phone numbers that you can reference if you get sick. Include the phone number for your local public health unit. Make sure that this information is prominently displayed somewhere and easy for you to find in the event that you become ill.
- **Ensure you have adequate supplies.** Make sure you have enough household supplies and medications on hand for two weeks in case you can't get to the store or pharmacy. There is no need to stockpile supplies or medications—a two-week supply is sufficient.
- **Practice social distancing, but not social isolation.** Leverage technology to keep in touch with family and friends, whether it be by phone, email, video call or social media.
- **As much as possible, try to maintain your routine.** Remain active, physically and mentally.
- **Have a plan for visitors.** If you receive in-home support services, such as personal care, cleaning or meal delivery, have hand sanitizer available for everyone to use before and after the visit.

- **Reach out for support.** If you have questions or need support, [contact us](#). We're here to help.

Tips for caregivers and family members

As a caregiver, it's important to have a plan in the event that you become ill or need to self-quarantine. Here are some things you can do right away to make sure you are prepared:

- **Expand your circle of care.** Ask family members, friends or neighbours if they can step in if you are unable to continue caring for the person due to illness or quarantine.
- **Document instructions for care.** Provide detailed information for the person coming in to provide care to make it very clear what needs to be done. Our [All about me](#) booklet is a great tool for recording this information.
 - Make a list any medications the person is taking, including dose and frequency.
 - Make a list of doctors, clinics and pharmacies and their contact information.
 - Include the phone number for [your local Alzheimer Society](#) in case they have questions or need help.
- **Ensure the person has adequate supplies.** Make sure there are enough household supplies and medications on hand for two weeks in case you can't get to the store or pharmacy. There is no need to stockpile supplies or medications—a two-week supply is sufficient.
- **Leverage technology.** Explore what technology might be used if you can't be there in person. Technology can help mitigate feelings of isolation and help everyone stay connected despite social distancing protocols. Reach out to staff at your local Alzheimer Society if you need help introducing new technologies.
- **Maintain a routine.** Changes in routine can cause confusion and stress for people with dementia, so it's important to try and maintain their regular routine as much as possible. [Your local Alzheimer Society](#) can advise you on activities that can be done from home if day programs or other activities are cancelled due to COVID-19.
- **Have a plan for visitors.** If the person receives in-home support services, such as home care, cleaning or meal delivery, have hand sanitizer available for everyone to use before and after the visit.

- **Take care of yourself.** Your health is important, too. Do not ignore it. [Contact us](#) if you have questions or need support. We're here to help.

Tips for the public

We encourage everyone to check in on the caregivers in your community and social circles. Ask if they need help and offer to run errands. Simple gestures such as this can make a big difference for individuals and families facing dementia, who already experience higher levels of social isolation and loneliness at the best of times. It's important that we all be there for them during this difficult period.

More information

For more information about COVID-19, consult the following reputable sources:

- Public Health Agency of Canada: [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)
- Provincial and territorial health agencies:
 - [Alberta Health](#)
 - [BC Centre for Disease Control](#)
 - [Government of Manitoba](#)
 - [New Brunswick Public Health](#)
 - [Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Health and Community Services](#)
 - [Northwest Territories Health and Social Services](#)
 - [Nova Scotia Health Authority](#)
 - [Nunavut Department of Health](#)
 - [Ontario Ministry of Health](#)
 - [Government of Prince Edward Island](#)
 - [Quebec Health](#)

- [Saskatchewan Health Authority](#)
- [Government of Yukon](#)

Sources and additional resources:

- [Be Ready for an Emergency Department Visit](#) (Alzheimer Society of Canada)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Tips for Dementia Caregivers](#) (Alzheimer Association)
- [Family Caregivers and COVID-19 Precautions Caregivers Need to Take Now](#) (Ontario Caregiver Organization)
- [Memory Tips & Tricks \(PDF\)](#) (Alzheimer Society of Canada)
- [Personal Care \(PDF\)](#) (Alzheimer Society of Canada)
- [Reducing caregiver stress](#) (Alzheimer Society of Canada)
- [Self-care for the caregiver](#) (Alzheimer Society of Canada)
- [Social Distancing YES, Social Isolation NO: Caring for Those Living with Dementia, Stroke and Neurodegenerative Diseases](#) (Ontario Neurodegenerative Diseases Research Initiative – ONDRI)
- [Tips for communicating with a person with dementia](#) (Alzheimer Society of Canada)