

Tips for visiting someone with dementia

Over the holidays, people with dementia want to see people they care about, just like everyone else. But as dementia progresses, visits can become challenging. Whether the person you care for lives at home or in long-term care, it's best to come prepared. Even in later stages of the disease, there's still much you can do to provide comfort, care and spread some holiday cheer. Here are some general tips to help the visit go smoothly:

The long-term care staff can be your best ally. Ask them:

- About special holiday events at the facility
- When it's best for you to join
- How long you should plan your visits for, given the other activities.
- How often you should come as you may want to bring others along.



As a general rule, for those earlier in the disease, try to do activities that will help them maintain their abilities. For those later in the disease, activities centred on sensory stimulation are best. Here are a few ideas:

- Help with wrapping gifts, writing cards and making holiday phone calls to friends and family members. Try to let them participate as much as possible.
- Decorate their room for the holidays.
- Listen to holiday music.
- Bring them their favourite treat.
- Attend religious services.
- Bring a child or pet along and just watch.
- Bring a bouquet of flowers and arrange them in a vase together.