

# Alzheimer *Society*

S A S K A T C H E W A N

## **Multi-Step Safety Plan for Reducing Risk of Getting Lost**

### **A Guide for People with Dementia**

**Learn More** **Live Well**



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## Acknowledgements

The Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan’s **Multi-Step Safety Plan for Reducing Risk of Getting Lost: A Guide for People with Dementia** was adapted from **Disorientation and getting lost: A guide for people living with dementia** originally published by the Alzheimer Society of B.C.

We wish to thank our colleagues at the Alzheimer Society of B.C. for their collaboration, guidance, and dedication to partnerships that help people with dementia live safely.

The Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan also thanks the Provincial Early-Stage Support Group for consultation about the resource content and design.

The Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan appreciates being able to include Dr. Noelannah Neubauer’s resource, called **Canadian Guidelines for Safe Wandering: Person Living with Dementia Version** (adapted for use in Saskatchewan), in this guide.

**Note:** The word “wandering” has been used in this resource. The term “wayfinding” may be used interchangeably with “wandering” in other publications.

## Disorientation and dementia

Sometimes people living with dementia become disoriented, even in familiar places. This means you might become confused or find it hard to get home. This happens because of physical changes to the brain which are caused by Alzheimer's disease or another type of dementia.



Symptoms of dementia, like memory loss or changes in vision, can make familiar places look unfamiliar.

### Why is this important?

There is a risk of becoming lost at any stage of the dementia journey. Even if you are not currently experiencing disorientation, you may want to learn more about this symptom and put some safety strategies in place.

Here are some situations where confusion may occur:

- Going for a walk – even when taking a familiar route.
- Losing a sense of direction in a crowd of people.
- Taking a shortcut and then not knowing which way to go.
- Going on a short errand and becoming disoriented.
- Being in a place where there is too much noise or stimulation, such as a mall or airport.
- Experiencing side-effects from medication.
- Driving – even when taking a familiar route.

### Strategies to reduce the risk of getting lost

The Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan encourages people with dementia to develop a multi-step safety plan to reduce their risk of getting lost. Plans that include more than one strategy are encouraged because relying on only one strategy may not meet all of your needs all of the time.

A few examples of strategies to reduce the risk of getting lost are:

- Use memory aids
  - Walk familiar routes
- Stay safe
  - Dress for weather conditions
  - Consider staying home when weather conditions are stormy
  - If you think you may be lost, ask someone for help or call 9-1-1
- Ask your family and friends to help
  - Invite a walking buddy to join you



Review the **Canadian Guidelines for Safe Wandering: Person Living with Dementia Version** (Appendix A, pages 7-8) to better understand the levels of risk of getting lost and recommended strategies.

Write down your own strategies in the **Identification Kit** (Appendix B, pages 9-11).

## Identification & Identification Kit

It is always important to wear some form of identification. Even if you don't think that you will get lost, it is a good idea to be prepared just in case. There are many options to choose from. You may want to talk with your family or friends to determine which type of identification would work best for you.

- Wear **Customized Identification** and carry **Identification Card** (e.g., bracelet, necklace, lanyard with identification card attached, identification card in our purse or wallet)
- Complete the **Identification Kit** (Appendix B, page 9)

## Locating Devices

A variety of locating devices, also called personal tracking devices, are available for purchase. Types of devices include GPS (cell phones), radio frequency and Bluetooth. Remember, technology may or may not always work.

Learn more about **Locating Devices** at [alzheimer.ca/locatingdevices](https://alzheimer.ca/locatingdevices), including a list of choices, a checklist for finding the right device and more in-depth information.

Disclaimer: The Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan does not endorse nor recommend any specific types or brands of locating technology.

To learn more about locating devices visit [alzheimer.ca/locatingdevices](https://alzheimer.ca/locatingdevices), call the **Dementia Helpline** at 1-877-949-4141 or contact your local Alzheimer Society Resource Centre.

## References & Additional Resources

- **Dementia and driving:** [https://alzheimer.ca/sites/default/files/documents/conversations\\_driving.pdf](https://alzheimer.ca/sites/default/files/documents/conversations_driving.pdf)
- **Dementia and living alone:** <https://alzheimer.ca/sites/default/files/documents/conversations-about-dementia-and-living-alone.pdf>
- **Locating devices:** [alzheimer.ca/locatingdevices](https://alzheimer.ca/locatingdevices)
- **Memory tips & tricks:** <https://alzheimer.ca/sites/default/files/documents/memory-tips-and-tricks.pdf>
- **Shared experiences: Suggestions for living well with Alzheimer's disease:** <https://alzheimer.ca/sites/default/files/documents/sxp300-1e-2018-final-md.pdf>

## Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan

To access information, education and support in your community, call us through our provincial toll-free service:

### Dementia Helpline

Toll-Free: 1-877-949-4141

[helpline@alzheimer.sk.ca](mailto:helpline@alzheimer.sk.ca)

### Resource Centres

#### Cypress Resource Centre

Swift Current

Phone: 1-800-263-3367

[cypress@alzheimer.sk.ca](mailto:cypress@alzheimer.sk.ca)

#### Prairie North Resource Centre

Battleford

Phone: 306-445-2206

[prairienorth@alzheimer.sk.ca](mailto:prairienorth@alzheimer.sk.ca)

#### Prince Albert Parkland Resource Centre

Prince Albert

Phone: 306-922-2296

[paparkland@alzheimer.sk.ca](mailto:paparkland@alzheimer.sk.ca)

#### Regina Qu'Appelle Resource Centre

Regina

Phone: 306-949-4141

[regina@alzheimer.sk.ca](mailto:regina@alzheimer.sk.ca)

#### Saskatoon Resource Centre

Saskatoon

Phone: 306-683-6322

[saskatoon@alzheimer.sk.ca](mailto:saskatoon@alzheimer.sk.ca)

#### Sun Country Resource Centre

Estevan

Phone: 306-842-2273

[suncountry@alzheimer.sk.ca](mailto:suncountry@alzheimer.sk.ca)

#### Sunrise Resource Centre

Yorkton

Phone: 306-786-3600

[sunrise@alzheimer.sk.ca](mailto:sunrise@alzheimer.sk.ca)

If you would like to know more about our organization or if you would like to make a donation, please contact us:

### Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan

#### Provincial Office

301-2550 12th Avenue, Regina, SK S4P 3X1

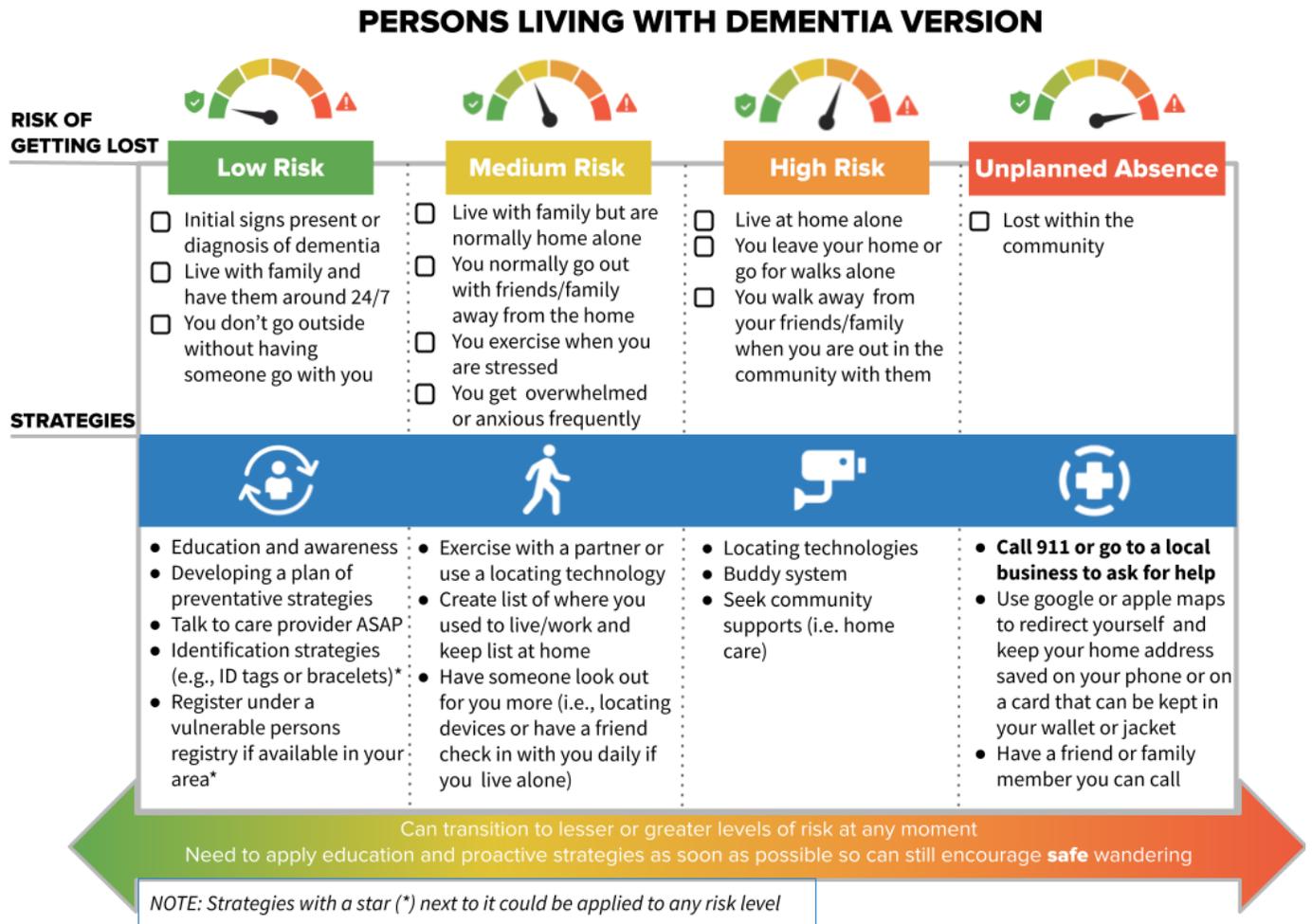
Phone: 306-949-4141 Toll-Free: 1-800-263-3367

[info@alzheimer.sk.ca](mailto:info@alzheimer.sk.ca)

[www.alzheimer.ca/sk](http://www.alzheimer.ca/sk)



## Appendix A – Canadian Guideline for Safe Wandering: Person Living with Dementia Version (Page 1)



# Canadian Guideline for Safe Wandering: Person Living with Dementia Version (Page 2)

## LIST OF AVAILABLE STRATEGIES

### Low Risk

- Education and awareness
  - o Finding Your Way Program (<http://findingyourwayontario.ca>)
  - o Alzheimer Society (<https://alzheimer.ca/en/sk>)
- Register yourself with the Vulnerable Person Registry (ask local police or Alzheimer Society to determine if your community has one in place) or with an identification program

### Medium Risk

- Exercise with a partner or wear a locating device. These devices can be purchased (<https://tech.findingyourwayontario.ca>) or you can use the ones already on your phone (e.g. Find My Friend App or Google maps)
- Create a list to keep with a close friend or your care partner of where you used to live and work so in the event you get lost this information can be used to help find you
- Have someone keep tabs as to where you are (i.e., locating devices or a buddy system)

### High Risk

- Consider locating technologies:
  - o Commercial GPS (<https://tech.findingyourwayontario.ca>)
  - o GPS devices available on your phone (e.g. Find My Friend App or Google maps)
- Seek community supports (i.e., home care, social workers, etc.)
- Register yourself with the Vulnerable Person Registry (ask local police or Alzheimer Society to determine if your community has one in place) or with an identification program

### Unplanned Absence

- Use google or apple maps on your phone to help you find your way back home and keep your home address saved on your phone or on a card that you can keep in your wallet or jacket
- Have a friend or family member you can call in case you are lost
- Go to a local business to ask for assistance
- Identification strategies (i.e., wear an identification bracelet, or put your care partner's phone number in your jacket or wallet)

## Appendix B: Multi-Step Safety Plan for Reducing Risk of Getting Lost

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Revision Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Keep this plan in an easy to locate place (front of refrigerator door).  
Share copies with family and friends. Update every 6 months.**

### Strategies to Reduce your Risk of Getting Lost

- Make customized identification and wear it
- Fill out identification kit (bottom of page 9, then pages 10 & 11)
- Carry Independence cards (from Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan)
- Discuss your plans for safety with family and friends
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Identification Kit

#### Your Information

First name: \_\_\_\_\_

Last name: \_\_\_\_\_

Nickname: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Language(s) spoken: \_\_\_\_\_

Home address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Recent Photo

Attach a recent, good quality photo clearly showing your head and shoulders here.

Update this photo every 6 months.

**Physical Description**

Height: \_\_\_\_\_ feet \_\_\_\_\_ inches  
 \_\_\_\_\_ metres \_\_\_\_\_ centimetres

Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ lbs or \_\_\_\_\_ kgs

Eye colour: \_\_\_\_\_

Hair colour: \_\_\_\_\_

Hair style: \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_

Complexion: \_\_\_\_\_

**Identifying Features**

Check all that apply:

Hearing aid(s):  Left  Right

Visual Aid(s):  Glasses  Contacts

Dentures:  Upper  Lower

Walking Aid:  Cane  Walker

Wheelchair

Other: (e.g., scars, birthmarks, tattoos).

Location and description:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Medical Information**

Medical condition(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_

Medication(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor's phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Wandering History**

Have you wandered before?  Yes  No

What are your favourite places to visit?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Where do/did you work?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

What bus routes have you taken in the past?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Personal Identification & Locating Devices**

Do you wear a form of identification  
 such as a bracelet, necklace?  Yes  No

If so, describe it:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a locating device?  Yes  No

If so, what is the type of locating device/model  
 and describe it:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Do You Have Access to a Vehicle?**

License plate number: \_\_\_\_\_

Vehicle colour: \_\_\_\_\_

Vehicle brand and model: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contact Person(s)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relation to you: \_\_\_\_\_

Relation to you: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Work phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Work phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Other notes:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_