

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT DEMENTIA

In the Clinic
Annals of Internal Medicine

People with dementia get forgetful and can later have problems doing everyday things, such as eating and getting dressed.

Medicines may help some people with dementia think better and keep from getting worse for a while.

Keeping active with family and friends also helps people with dementia

There is no cure for dementia. It usually gets worse over time.

When this happens, it is important to plan for the future.

Caring for People with Dementia

- Learn what to expect from the patient you help care for and find out what help he or she needs.
- Keep the patient busy with family and friends and ask about day programs that keep him or her active.
- Ask the doctor if and when medicines may help and which medicines may make things worse.
- Call the doctor if there are big changes in how the person is acting or thinking and have a plan for emergencies.
- Try to keep the patient from falling, getting lost, or getting hurt.
- Get a safe-return bracelet in case the patient gets lost. You can get one from the Alzheimer Association Safe Return Program at P.O. Box 9307, St. Louis, MO 63117-0307; 888-572-8566
- Be sure to take care of yourself by asking for help with caretaking; going to joint support groups; making time for yourself; staying healthy; and talking to your doctor if you feel very tired, sad, stressed, guilty, or burned out.
- Make a plan in case you can no longer care for the person at home.

Web Sites with Good Information about Dementia

Alzheimer Association

www.alz.org/alzheimers_disease_what_is_alzheimers.asp

ACP Foundation HealthTips

foundation.acponline.org/files/ht/dem_en.pdf

Family Caregiver Alliance

www.caregiver.org/caregiver/jsp/content_node.jsp?nodeid=569

National Institute on Aging

www.niapublications.org/agepages/forgetfulness.asp