

Tips to Navigate the Holidays With a Loved One Who Has Dementia

Plan ahead for holiday visit destinations. Consider stairs, chairs, restrooms, and what level the gathering is on (1st floor, 2nd floor)

When traveling, be sure to build in extra time to get there and also be prepared to leave earlier than planned if needed.

Keep holiday decorations at home simple. Avoid moving furniture around and using flashing lights.

Introduce each guest as they arrive, even if they are family members. For example, “Oh look, Cousin Tammy is here with your brother Joe” or “Here comes Steve Smith from next door.”

Pay attention to bright lights and loud music which can be overwhelming. Have a separate room or quiet area where your loved one can go if necessary.

The abundance of food and people passing plates can be confusing to a person with dementia. Having the food in one room and seating in another can simplify things.

Bring a bag with supplies such as extra clothes, wipes, tissues, band aids, etc.





Manage the expectations of those with whom you’ll be visiting during the holidays. Make them aware of any limitations and offer suggestions for interactions.

Using a washable scarf is a great way to protect clothing (like a dress shirt or sweater) as opposed to a bib.

Making a book with photos of family members for your loved one to look at, or watching a favorite holiday movie, may be comforting.

Have a trash bag to put soiled disposable undergarments in, in case there are no trash receptacles in the bathroom.