

## Alzheimer's Disease Health Center



### Adapting Your Home for Your Loved One With Alzheimer's

Caring for a person with Alzheimer's at home can be hard, especially if they are living with you.

Not only must space often be reorganized, but every room in the house that your loved one uses should be made as accident-proof as possible. Here are some tips to consider to help ensure a safe home environment for your loved one with Alzheimer's.

*Note: Not all of these recommendations may benefit your loved one's situation.*

#### Entrance and Exit

Can the house or apartment be entered and exited safely?

Is there a secure railing?

Are the stairs or ramps in good repair, without loose or uneven boards?

Can visitors be seen prior to their entering the house or apartment?

Does the lock work?

Can the lock easily be opened for an emergency exit?

Is the entrance/exit well lit and free of clutter?

Do you have an emergency exit plan and more than one fire escape route?

#### Living Areas

Are the walking pathways uncluttered?

Can your loved one get up and down from the sofa or chair safely? If not, consider investing in chairs with straight backs, armrests, and firm seats. Adding a firm cushion to existing pieces of furniture adds height to them, making it easier to get in and out of.

Can windows and doors be opened easily and locked securely?

Can the television be easily managed?

Can the light switches be manipulated easily? If not, try touchable lamps or those that react to sound.

Are electrical cords and telephone cords secured and out of the way to prevent tripping? Do not run cords under furniture or rugs where they can become frayed or damaged. Secure them with tape, not sharp tacks or nails.

Adapt the telephone by changing the small buttons to larger push buttons to ease dialing. Have frequently called and emergency numbers programmed into speed dial or tape these numbers to the phone receiver. Keep a portable or tabletop phone where it can be accessed in case of a fall.

#### Recommended Related to Alzheimer's

[Alzheimer's Caregivers: Sandwiched Between Parenting Your Kids and Your Parents](#)

There are about 10 million people in the U.S. -- mostly women -- who have chosen to take care of a loved one with Alzheimer's disease. It's a grueling job in itself, but many aren't only caregiving. They're also raising kids of their own -- and maybe working -- at the same time. "You're already a parent to your children, and then suddenly you have to become a caregiver to your parent," says Donna Schempp, LCSW, program director at the Family Caregiver Alliance in San Francisco. "It's very hard to..."

[Read the Alzheimer's Caregivers: Sandwiched Between Parenting Your Kids and Your Parents article >](#)

## **Kitchen**

Is the doorway accessible?

Are the appliances in working order?

Can the faucets of the sink be manipulated? If not, consider extended hand levers to make them easier to turn.

Can the refrigerator and freezer be opened and closed?

Can the high and low cabinets be safely opened and closed?

Is there adequate workspace?

Can utensils, pots and pans, and food be safely reached?

Can the stove controls and door be safely managed?

Can the outlets be reached?

Can food be safely transported to the eating area?

Are sharp objects safely stored?

Are flammables kept away from the stove area?

Keep towels, curtains and other flammable items away from the range/stove.

## **Bedroom**

Is the doorway accessible?

Can your loved one get in and out of bed safely? If not, consider purchasing an electric bed or mattress.

Is the light accessible from the bed?

Can the phone be easily reached?

Can clothing in the closet and dresser be reached?

Is there a clear path to the bathroom?

## **Bathroom**

Is the doorway accessible?

Can your loved one safely get in and out of the shower or bathtub? If not, install grab bars on the inside and outside of the bathtub or shower. Towel racks are not sturdy enough to be used as grab bars.

Will a tub bench or tub chair be needed? If so, use only ones with nonskid tips.

Are there bath mats or nonskid strips in place?

Can your loved one safely transfer to the toilet? If not, install a safety frame, raised seat, or grab bar.

Can the outlets be reached? Test GFCI outlets monthly by pushing the test button to make sure the appliance turns off and that it resets.

Can the light switches be turned on and off?

Can the faucet be easily used? If not, consider extended hand levers to make them easier to turn.

Is there a nightlight?

If there is a small bathroom rug, get rid of it. Replace it with a large rug that covers most of the floor and apply an adhesive back to it.

## **Stairways**

Is a secure handrail present? It may be helpful to install a second handrail so there is one on both sides of the stairs.

Is there adequate lighting at the top and bottom of the stairs?

Is the carpet secure?

Put rough texture treads on steps with a smooth surface.

Are the steps free of clutter?

If stairs are difficult, it may be helpful to arrange most of the activities on the lower level of the house.

## **General**

Are there working smoke detectors on every floor? Remember to change the batteries frequently.

Are there space heaters, electric blankets, or other fire hazards? If so, remove them. If they must be used, follow the manufacturer's safety instructions and keep them on a sturdy surface away from rugs, curtains, furniture, or papers.

Is there a carbon monoxide detector? If so, is it working properly?

Are the electrical cords in good condition and free of frays?

Are there outlets or switches that are unusually warm or hot to touch? If so, have the wiring replaced as soon as possible and do not use them.

Is there adequate lighting throughout the house or apartment? Consider using small nightlights to light up the hallways or bathroom to assist your loved one during the night.

Are all of the small rugs and runners slip resistant? If your loved one requires the use of a walker or wheelchair, remove all throw rugs.

Is the house or apartment free of insects or other pests?

Are the plumbing and utilities working? Make sure the hot water thermostat is set to "low" or 120 degrees to prevent burns.

Can the mail be retrieved safely? If not, arrange for someone to pick up the mail for your loved one.

Is phone accessible to your loved one? Suggestion: keep a cordless phone near your loved one's chair or put it in a pocket/pouch and attach it to their walker/wheelchair (if applicable).

Are emergency phone numbers posted on or near the telephone?

Are all medicines stored in the containers that they came in?

Are all medications clearly marked and stored away from children and confused family members?

**Further Reading:**

- [Legal Issues of Caregiving](#)
- [Starting Your Role As Caregiver](#)
- [A Caregiver's Plight](#)
- [Caring for the Caregiver](#)
- [Caregiving and Digestive Diseases](#)
- [Keeping Seniors Safe in Their Own Homes](#)
- [Caregivers, the Elderly, and Driving](#)
- [See All Caregiving and Elder Care Topics](#)

**Top Picks**

- [6 Serious Symptoms You Should Never Ignore](#)
- [Alzheimer's: Is It Time for More Help?](#)
- [Alzheimer's Symptoms: Mild to Severe](#)
- [Marijuana May Ease Alzheimer's Symptoms](#)
- [Top Tips for Caregivers](#)
- [Natural Remedies for Dry Mouth](#)

**WebMD Medical Reference**

SOURCE: Alzheimer's Association.

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My Notes: