

TRAVELLING WITH A PERSON WITH DEMENTIA

People enjoy travelling because of new experiences and an opportunity to break from routine. Early in the disease progression individuals may experience little difficulty and continue to enjoy traveling. As the disease progresses, changes in abilities may make it harder for the person to cope with change in surroundings and daily routines. Traveling with someone who has dementia requires thought and planning. The following are some tips to keep in mind to make the trip easier.

PLAN

- Include and prepare the person. If possible allow the person to help plan. Give the person a copy of the trip itinerary for their reference.
- Try to anticipate every detail and plan accordingly. Include a backup plan, should the person experience difficulties.
- Wandering is a possible risk. Register the person with MedicAlert® Safely Home® (Call 1-855-581-3794). It is a nationwide program designed to help identify the person who is lost and assist in a safe return home.
- Take recent photographs with you and take note of what the person is wearing. Carry a description of the person, the name they respond to and details of their preferred places of interest. (This will assist a search if one is necessary.)
- Keep a copy of the name and number of the hotel, in a familiar spot in the person's purse or pocket so they can ask for help if they get lost.
- If the anticipation of the trip causes the person to become anxious, wait until just shortly before you leave to tell them.

SIMPLIFY

- Try to get a direct flight.
- Consider alternative forms of traveling such as a cruise, which provides a relaxing, safe atmosphere.
- Take a few important items that might help reassure and orient the person in case they become anxious and confused during the travel (e.g., photos, a favorite quilt/blanket, a familiar book).

ASK FOR HELP

- If possible have someone travel with you to provide help.
- Inform the airlines that you are traveling with a person with dementia. You may want to request early boarding, a wheelchair or transportation upon arrival.
- Request seating near the rest rooms.

The Alzheimer Society of Manitoba's mission is to alleviate the individual, family and social consequences of Alzheimer's disease and related disorders while supporting the search for a cure.

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PROVINCIAL - WINNIPEG 10-120 DONALD ST R3C 4G2 204-943-6622 alzmb@alzheimer.mb.ca

INTERLAKE / EASTERN - BEAUSEJOUR
BOX 1786, 31 1ST STREET R0E 0C0
TEL: 204-268-4752 FAX: 204-268-4799
EMAIL: alzne@alzheimer.mb.ca

SOUTH CENTRAL - WINKLER
BOX 119, 204 MAIN STREET R6W 4A4
TEL: 204-325-5634 FAX: 204-325-6496
EMAIL: alzsc@alzheimer.mb.ca

NORTH CENTRAL - PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE
108 B SASKATCHEWAN AVE E. R1N 0L1
TEL: 204-239-4898 FAX: 204-239-0902
EMAIL: alznc@alzheimer.mb.ca

SOUTH EASTMAN - STEINBACH
9A - 90 BRANDT STREET R5G 0T3
TEL: 204-326-5771 FAX: 204-326-5799
EMAIL: alzse@alzheimer.mb.ca

PARKLAND - DAUPHIN
118 MAIN STREET NORTH R7N 1C2
TEL: 204-638-4483 FAX: 204-638-4493
EMAIL: alzprk@alzheimer.mb.ca

WESTMAN - BRANDON
UNIT 4B-457 9TH STREET R7A 1K2
TEL: 204-729-8320 FAX: 204-726-1082
EMAIL: alzwm@alzheimer.mb.ca