

## Helpful Suggestions

- Provide prepared meals that can be easily reheated and step by step instructions on how to use a microwave.
- Leave countertops bare.

## Accommodating Behaviour

### Wandering

- Remove items that may trigger wandering (jackets and shoes)
- Place distractions by doorways such as baskets filled with items
- Install bells and alarm systems on doors Arrange furniture to allow for circular wandering
- Enroll with “Safely Home” at [www.alzheimers.ca](http://www.alzheimers.ca) or contact local branch

### Confusion

- Mark doors to bedroom and bathroom with pictures or something meaningful Cover windows at night as reflections may cause confusion
- Cover mirrors in the home as they may be frightening
- Keep things simple and maintain a routine
- Use pictures and labels as reminders of daily tasks

For more information visit:

- <http://www.alzheimer.ca/en>
- <http://www.alzheimerbc.org>

For more information contact:

### Dementia Helpline

- 604-681-8651
- Toll Free 1-800-936-6033

### Alzheimer Society of British Columbia

- Surrey Branch Tel 604-541-0606

For more information about Occupational Therapy visit:

### Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists

- [www.caot.ca](http://www.caot.ca)

[www.fraserhealth.ca](http://www.fraserhealth.ca)

This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.

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To order: [patienteduc.fraserhealth.ca](mailto:patienteduc.fraserhealth.ca)

## Caring for a Person with Dementia



## Safety at Home



## What is Dementia?

Dementia is defined as a progressive and degenerative disease caused by a number of different conditions. It is often characterized by a loss of memory, language function, ability to think abstractly and ability to care for oneself. A person may experience changes in mood, personality, judgement and social behaviour. There are several different types of dementia and all can significantly affect a person's daily function.

Taking care of a person with dementia can be challenging and gratifying at the same time. In order to provide the best care it is important to educate yourself and understand the disease, the effects it can have on the person's behaviour and ability to perform daily activities.

Occupational Therapy can help identify and improve the ability of people with dementia to perform daily activities. The following are some strategies that can help provide a safe and secure environment at home for those living with dementia.

## Home Safety

### Environment

- Store area rugs, secure carpets and remove loose cords to prevent falls  
Use chairs with armrests. Remove rocking chairs and furniture with sharp edges
- Move furniture to allow space for the use of a walker
- Lock away medicine, cleaning supplies and other hazardous chemicals
- Secure stairways by installing swing gates and railings
- Hide small appliances if a person is unable to use them safely including hairdryers and toasters

### Helpful Suggestions

- Make sure the lighting is adequate to avoid shadows that may confuse the person

## Bathroom Safety

### Environment

- Ensure recommended bathroom equipment is used properly including grab bars and shower seat/bath-bench  
Place non-slip mats inside and outside of the tub
- Keep shampoo and other fluids out of reach

- Do not use bath oils, they can make the tub slippery
- Remove locks from the bathroom doors to prevent the person from getting locked in
- Lower the temperature of the hot water heater and label the hot water tap with red tape

### Helpful Suggestions

- Prepare ahead of time and lay out clothing, shampoo and towels
- Use coloured bubble bath or mats to allow for better perception of depth  
Do not use dark coloured mats as they may give the illusion of a hole
- Use coloured tape around bathroom fixtures or a black toilet seat to provide contrast and better perception
- Always supervise or get support

## Kitchen Safety

### Environment

- Remove and store away sharp utensils  
When not in the kitchen remove and hide stove switch knobs
- Install safety latches on cupboards which may contain hazardous items
- Remove and hide sink stoppers to prevent overflow accidents