

Alzheimer's Guidelines for Caregivers

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Introduction to Caregivers Guidelines for Alzheimer's Patients

I observed and noted the symptoms for all three (3) stages of Alzheimer's disease and developed guidelines.

My observations were from my care giving for my wife, Martha. My wife was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2004.

I was her sole caretaker and observed all the symptom noted and developed these guidelines for each symptom.

My most important guidelines were to maintain a positive attitude, always continued to improve my capabilities; remember that the patient is a gift from heaven and keep your promises.

I understand her situation,
I accept her state.
I don't expect too much,
And I don't try to anticipate.

I know it's up to me to change,
She does her best,
I learn to respond to her needs,
And I always do my best.

I am her words,
I am her memories,
I will always love her,
And I will always hold her in my heart.

I will always maintain a positive attitude,
And always keep my promises,
I will remember that love endures all things,
Because she is my gift from Heaven.

Stages of Alzheimer's

Stage 1

- Less energy
- Memory loss
- Mood swings
- Slow to react
- Shy away from anything new
- Speech and understanding slower
- Gets lost
- Hide any items they think valuable
- Can't pay bills, write letters or read
- Become depressed, irritable and aggressive
- Hallucinations

Stage 2

- Becoming disabled
- Events become difficult to remember
- Loss of comprehension
- Can't tell time or know dates or days
- Loss of understanding questions
- Patient starts to have bladder and bowel continence
- Doesn't recognize familiar faces
- Loses proper speech – can't make a sentence

Stage 3

- More unresponsive
- Loses all control of bladder and bowel function
- No one is recognizable
- Loses ability to chew and swallow
- Loss of mobility
- Loss of speech and understanding
- Becomes bedridden – sleeps 14 – 18 hours per day
- Can't feed themselves
- Receptive to diseases
- Coma and death

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Caregivers Guidelines for Alzheimer's Patient

- ✓ **Don't say anything negative**
- ✓ Never raise your voice to patient (no cursing or scolding)
- ✓ Organize everything for the patient
- ✓ Train yourself – the patient isn't trainable
- ✓ Do the same tasks at the same time everyday
- ✓ Develop menu on weekly basis. Make sure all meals are balanced and caloric intake for preferable weight.
- ✓ Always help the patient conduct the task; otherwise it will frustrate the patient
- ✓ Always talk about family and show pictures to the patient **DAILY**
- ✓ Help the patient remember all "*the good times*"
- ✓ Have soothing music playing during the day
- ✓ Never turn down be in daytime – only when it is time for patient to go to bed
- ✓ Always plan for unexpected changes, such as incontinence, lack of mobility, not knowing people or how to conduct a task like bathing, toilet, brushing teeth, shaving, putting on makeup etc.
- ✓ Make all meals look appetizing and have a flower (rose) at the ladies place
- ✓ Keep everything clean all the time – never leave a room un-straightened
- ✓ If you leave the patient for a few minutes or an hour always say I will be back in a few minutes or something similar. Always say the same thing every time you leave. When you return always greet the patient with See I told you I would be back in a few minutes.
- ✓ Never, never leave soiled depends, etc. on patient and always wash patients after a bladder or bowel movement. Then apply Cetaphil, (or other form of lotion on them). Put on a new Depend.
- ✓ Don't ask questions when the patient can't interpret what you are asking
- ✓ Make patient laugh as much as possible during the day
- ✓ When the patient cries, console them by holding them and tell them they are loved – talk about **Good** memories.
- ✓ When the patient is aggressive (stage 1 & 2), hold them tight so they can't be aggressive and talk to them about Good memories and tell them you love them. (They will need depression medicine during the period). Don't let them wear hard shoes, they will kick you.
- ✓ Make all projects, bathing, putting on make-up, cutting and washing their hair, cutting finger and toe nails an enjoyable experience
- ✓ When patient has to be fed don't try to eat at the same time. Just feed the patient and talk with them. (Make it a fun project)
- ✓ Show pictures of family, explaining who they are, etc. **every day**.
- ✓ Remember you have to make all decisions for the patient without asking any questions
- ✓ Let patient use only one bathroom; this will be less frustrating to the patient

- ✓ Don't give pain medicine such as aspirin, Advil, etc. that will cause upset stomach and/or ulcers. (Consult the patient's Doctor)
- ✓ Give medicine at specific time of day. If patient has had side effects from medications give it in the evening. Give medicines only at breakfast and evening and before bedtime. Give medicine with milk product to prevent side effects.
- ✓ Always talk to patient's doctor on all pills and which ones that can be discontinued
- ✓ Read [Mount Sinai](#) newsletter on Alzheimer's. It will come to you monthly
- ✓ **When taking patient to the doctor, write up answers to all questions the doctor will ask such as**
 1. Medicines taken, plus times; any side effects.
 2. Blood pressure and weight of patient
 3. General demeanor of patient
 4. List of all questions you have for doctor
- ✓ Need's you have like new prescriptions. Give a copy of this information to the doctor prior to the appointment. Don't go over this write – up with the patient.
- ✓ Keep a record of any side effects from food or medicine.
- ✓ Plan ahead of future problems and purchase needed items prior to the existence of the problem.
- ✓ Always have a loving and caring relationship with the patient. Tell the patient that we need to take care of each other
- ✓ Always maintain a positive attitude
- ✓ Continue to analyze and better your capabilities as a caregiver.
- ❖ ***Remember that the patient is a gift from heaven***
- ❖ ***Always keep your promises***

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Alzheimer's Prayer
"My guide and prayer for caring for Martha"

*Please don't ask me to remember,
And don't try to make me understand.
Let me rest and know you are with me,
And kiss my cheek and hold my hand.*

*I am confused beyond your concept,
Also, I am sad and sick and lost.
All I know is that I really need you,
And to be with me at all costs.*

*Please don't lose patience with me,
And don't scold or curse or cry.
I can't help the way I am acting,
And can't be any different though I try.*

*Please just remember that I need you,
And that the best of me is gone.
Please don't fail to stand beside me,
And Love me till my life is done.*

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