

Areas of the Home to Attend to When Your Loved One Wanders

If you are living with, or coordinating care for, a loved one living with dementia, you may find yourself worrying about your loved one walking right out the front door. Wandering, or walking without a purpose, is a common behavioral symptom of Alzheimer's Disease and other memory loss diagnoses. Approximately 6 out of every 10 seniors with dementia will wander; while some may never become lost or endanger themselves, it is still wise to assure that you are keeping your loved one as safe as possible. Here are a few areas of the home to attend to and ensure your loved one's safety.



Doors and Windows

While you certainly don't want the home to feel too confining, it is important that you are preventing unattended exits. Seniors who wander can not only head out of their home alone and become lost, but can also leave the home without proper outerwear for the weather. To keep your loved one safe, invest in simple door alarms that ring when the door opens or in safety locks for the doorknobs. You can also install a locking

mechanism higher up on the door to prevent unattended exits. If you are finding that the locks are working but that your loved one is obsessed with trying to unlock the doors and becoming anxious, consider painting the door the same color as the wall. This can camouflage the exit and keep your loved one from feeling anxious or fixated on getting out.

Kitchen

There are many stories of seniors living with dementia who wander into the kitchen during the nighttime, confused at the time of day, to cook a full meal. Remember that the kitchen is often a comforting place of the home, and part of your loved one's routine, that they loved one will frequently visit. To keep your loved one safe and as independent as possible, consider locks for the stove dials and keep any cleaning chemicals out of reach.

Bathroom

[The bathroom is the most dangerous part of the home for seniors](#), mostly due to fall risk factors such as slippery floors and rug trip hazards. For those living with dementia, the bathroom can pose fall risks as well as unsafe opportunities to ingest medications. Seniors living with dementia are at risk to take too much – or too little – of their [prescribed medications](#). Assure that you have prescription and over the counter medications (including vitamins or supplements) unavailable to your loved one. Instead, someone should be managing their medication distribution.

Caregivers

Finally, as your loved one progresses through the disease, wandering may increase to the point where more care in the home is needed. [Our Angels](#) are here to help ease your worries and build a relationship of trust with your loved one. We strive to provide care that will not only keep your loved one safe, but that will also add to their quality of life.

Next Steps

We are pleased to introduce our new [Family Learning Center website](#); this toolkit is available free to you and anyone seeking resources, information, and best practices as a caregiver or concerned loved one. Start out with “Becoming a Caregiver” and “Avoiding Caregiver Stress” to help you as you start, or continue, caring for your loved one.

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