

Preparing for Your Doctor's Visit

Fill out the information below to the best of your ability. Share it with your doctor. Be open and honest in answering any questions your doctor may ask you about the changes you've been experiencing. It is recommended to bring someone with you, either a family member or someone who knows you well enough to contribute information and can take notes so you don't have to worry about remembering anything.

Has your health, memory or mood changed?

How did it change?

When did you first notice the change?

How often does it happen?

When does it happen? Is it always at a certain time of day?

What do you do when it happens?

What behaviors are the same?

Do you have problems with any of the following?

Please check the answer.

Repeating or asking the same thing over and over?

Not at all Sometimes Frequently Does not apply

Remembering appointments, family occasions, holidays?

Not at all Sometimes Frequently Does not apply

Writing checks, paying bills, balancing the checkbook?

Not at all Sometimes Frequently Does not apply

Shopping independently (e.g., for clothing or groceries)?

Not at all Sometimes Frequently Does not apply

Taking medications according to the instructions?

- Not at all Sometimes Frequently Does not apply

Getting lost while walking or driving in familiar places?

- Not at all Sometimes Frequently Does not apply

Medications and medical history

List of medications (dosage, frequency) including over-the-counter and prescription: (Bring all over-the-counter and prescription medications with you to your visit.)

List vitamins and herbal supplements:

List current medical conditions:

List past medical conditions:

What to bring with you to your doctor visit

Bring someone with you, either a family member or someone who knows you well enough to contribute information and can take notes so you don't have to worry about remembering everything.

Bring all over-the-counter and prescription medications.

Bring your Advance Directives if you have them.

Questions to ask the doctor

What are tests I need to take and how long will it take to get a diagnosis? Will you refer me to a specialist?

Could the medicines I'm taking be causing my symptoms?

Do I have any other conditions that could be causing my symptoms or making them worse?

What should I expect if it is Alzheimer's?

Which treatments are available for Alzheimer's? What are the risks and benefits and possible side effects?

What about participating in a clinical trial? What are the risks and benefits?

Is there anything else I should know?

When should I come back for another visit?

Where can I get information about Advance Directives if I don't yet have one?

This tool was amended from tools developed by the Alzheimer's Association. Some information in this tool was developed for the Chronic Care Networks for Alzheimer's Disease (CCNIAD) project and is the joint property of the Alzheimer's Association and the National Chronic Care Consortium.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS

INFORMATION & RESOURCES FOR CAREGIVERS

Information & Resource Lines

- 211: County-wide info/resources, <http://211sandiego.org>
- Aging & Independence Services: (800) 510-2020, specific info/resources for older adults, including Adult Protective Services, <http://sandiegocounty.gov/hhsa/programs/ais/>
- Alzheimer's Association: (800) 272-3900, Alzheimer's disease specific <http://info/resources.alz.org>
- Alzheimer's San Diego: (858) 492-4400, San Diego based resource organization; <http://alzsd.org>
- Southern Caregiver Resource Center: (800) 827-1008, Caregiver focused info/resources <http://caregivercenter.org/>

Alzheimer's-Specific Resources

- Alzheimer's Association: (800) 272-3900, Includes information on specific behavioral issues
- Alzheimer's San Diego: (858) 492-4400, <http://alzsd.org>
- Glenner Center: (619) 543-4700, <http://glenner.org>
- Southern Caregiver Resource Center: (800) 827-1008, <http://caregivercenter.org>
- UC San Diego Shiley-Marcos Alzheimer's Disease Research Center: (858) 822-4800, <http://adrc.ucsd.edu>

Common Needs Resources

- California Department of Aging, 916-322-5290, <http://www.aging.ca.gov>
- Caregiver Resources: Southern Caregiver Resource Center, (800) 827-1008, <http://caregivercenter.org>
- Health Insurance Resources: Health, Information, Counseling & Advocacy Program (HICAP), (858) 565-1392, <http://www.cahealthadvocates.org>
- In-Home Care Resources: In-Home Supportive Services, (800) 510-2020, <http://sandiegocounty.gov/hhsa/programs/ais/>
- Jewish Family Services Older Adult Helpline 858-637-3040, <http://www.jfssd.org>
- Legal Resources: Elder Law & Advocacy, (858) 565-1392, <http://www.seniorlaw-sd.org>
- SeniorHelp.org Directory for assisted living communities, in-home caregivers, etc. 866-333-5183.
- US Department of Health and Human Services Administration on Aging, <http://www.aoa.gov>
- VA San Diego Healthcare System Caregiver Support. www.caregiver.va.gov 619-497-8424.
- Getting to Know Dementia: A Patient's Guide to Diagnosis, Treatment and Care, Fourth Edition, 2011. UBC eHealth Strategy Office, 855 W 10th Avenue, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, V5Z http://www.iconproject.org/dnn_icon/Portals/0/Docs/2011-06-08-GTKDEnglish-Web.pdf
- Mace, N. & Rabins, P. The 36-Hour Day: A Family Guide to Caring for People with Alzheimer Disease, other Dementias, and Memory Loss in Later Life.

Safety Resources

- Alzheimer's Association "Safe Return" program using identification products such as necklaces and bracelets, wallet cards, clothing labels with toll free 800 numbers on them. www.alz.org/SafeReturn
- Adult Protective Services: (800) 510-2020, for elder and disabled adult abuse reporting
- Sheriff's "Take Me Home" Program and You Are Not Alone Program: www.sdsheriff.net/tmh (info on registering)

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH INDIVIDUAL WITH COGNITIVE ISSUES

Tips for improved communications:

- Make just one request at a time.
- Speak slowly with good diction.
- Allow time for the individual to respond to your question or request.
- Use many of the five senses with the individual: sight, smell, touch, taste, sound.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Assume a comfortable, relaxed posture to make the individual at ease.
- Identify and reflect the individual's concerns, "I see you are uncomfortable..."
- Use simple, direct statements or requests.

Using Redirection to Improve Communications

Redirection is an intention method of refocusing the individual to remain calm, cooperative, content and safe. Often, individuals with cognitive issues may be frustrated or agitated due to their inability to effectively communicate or have their needs met. It is key to enter the individual's reality, approach in a calm manner, and communicate your desire to help.

- Present options: "Would you like this or this?"
- Compliment: "My that's a beautiful sweater!"
- Request Help: "Can you please help me fold these towels?"
- Helpful Distractions: Food, drink, reminiscent stories, music, humor
- Validate: "You look worried."
- Distract: "Let's look over there..." "Let's plan to do that later. In the meantime, ..."
- Redirect: "That coffee smells good. Do you want a cup?"

Common Delusions in Individuals with Dementia

- Accusations of infidelity
- Persons or images from TV are real
- Fear of abandonment
- Accusations of theft of one's property
- Claims of impersonation (spouse is imposter)
- Current residence is not one's home
- Misidentification of familiar persons