

Holiday Tips for Everyone Living with Dementia

Tips for the Person with Dementia

- Take some time out to relax
- Do what you enjoy
- Consider letting people know when you need a break or are having trouble
- Make a list with your partner of what you would like to do this season
- Use the list to help keep on track
- Consider saying – “I know I know you, but I just can’t place you...” when someone greets you and you aren’t sure who they are to you
- Watch or listen to old, familiar music, movies, TV programs that make you feel good
- Get some exercise every day
- Get plenty of water each day
- Be careful about too many sweets or treats
- Work *with a partner* to do familiar and fun ‘doing’ activities (for example: make, sign or mail cards OR make up mixes with recipes to share or bake something and wrapping it)

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Tips for the Care Partner

- Keep gatherings smaller and visits shorter
- Offer time out
- Make a list of pleasures to do
- Encourage visitors to understand before they begin interacting
- Encourage going out and doing something fun together rather than just talking
- Ask visitors to bring old pictures, old familiar items or props, and be prepared to reminisce about old times
- Take breaks from each other
- Consider cutting back on traditions if they seem distressing
- Help visitors out by introducing them with some orienting information, if they forget to do so
- Get some exercise & take care of your stress levels
- Get a ‘friend’ to help the person with dementia select gifts, shop, or do something special for loved ones, including you!

We thought these TIPS would be valuable to you or someone you know, during the holidays!

Tips for the Visitor

- Start by looking friendly and offering your hand in a handshake
- Introduce yourself by name, then PAUSE, if the person still doesn’t seem to ‘know’ you, give them a little more background information
- Use shorter phrases and PAUSE between thoughts or ideas, giving the person a chance to respond
- Talk about old times more than recent information
- Keep memories positive, if possible
- Accept ‘general comments’, don’t push for specifics
- Don’t correct errors, go with the flow of the conversation
- Be prepared to hear old stories over and over, use old pictures or props to bring up other old memories... *and laugh!*
- Do something with the person rather than just talking to them
- *If the person says something distressing or seems worried about something, realize it may not be true, but they are not lying to you, their brain is lying to them. Check with the care partner before acting on it.*