

How to minimise the risks of wandering associated with dementia



1. ESTABLISH A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Ensure the living space is secure and free from hazards. Install locks, alarms, and motion sensors on doors and windows to alert caregivers when they are opened. Remove objects that could potentially cause harm, such as sharp items or toxic substances.

2. CREATE ROUTINE AND FAMILIARITY

Create a structured daily routine to help reduce anxiety and restlessness. Familiarity can provide a sense of security for people with dementia. Place familiar objects and photographs around the living space to help your loved one to feel calm and comfortable. Try to limit exposing your loved one to new environments or busy areas such as shopping centres if you think this could be stressful for them.

3. PROVIDE REASSURANCE

If your loved one feels lost, anxious or disoriented, try to stay calm and help them to settle.

4. PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT

Structured and meaningful activities planned throughout the day can help to create interest and alleviate boredom.

5. MAKE IDENTIFICATION AND COMMUNICATION EASY

Make sure your loved one wears identification at all times, such as a bracelet or pendant with contact information. It can also be helpful to let their neighbours and local authorities know about their

condition, so they can provide assistance or call you if they see anything happening.

6. IDENTIFY 'CHALLENGING' TIMES OF THE DAY

Is there a time that your loved one tends to wander the most? Many people with dementia can tend to wander around early evening, for example - this is called 'sundowning'. If you do identify a particular time for wandering, try planning an engaging activity around that time to help reduce anxiety, agitation, and restlessness. If your loved one tends to wander during the night if they get up to use the toilet, you might like to try limiting (but not eliminating) liquids two hours before bedtime

7. ENSURE BASIC NEEDS ARE BEING MET

Does your loved one have easy access to a toilet, and to the food and drink they need?

8. PROVIDE SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

Provide constant supervision, especially during periods of increased agitation or confusion. Engage your loved one in activities that stimulate their mind and body, such as puzzles, games, and exercises. These types of activities can often help to reduce restlessness.