

Alzheimer's Caregiving Tips

Grooming and Dressing

When people feel good about how they look, they often feel better. Helping people with Alzheimer's disease brush their teeth, shave, put on makeup, and get dressed can help them feel more like themselves.

Mouth Care

Here are some tips to help the person with Alzheimer's care for his or her teeth and mouth.

- Show the person how to brush his or her teeth. Go step by step. Remember to let the person do as much as possible.
- Brush your teeth at the same time.
- Help the person clean his or her dentures.
- Ask the person to rinse his or her mouth with water after each meal and use mouthwash once a day.
- Try a long-handled, angled, or electric toothbrush if you need to brush the person's teeth.
- Take the person to see a dentist. Some dentists specialize in treating people with Alzheimer's. Ask the dentist how often the person should be seen.



Other Grooming

Here are some other suggestions for grooming:

- Encourage a woman to wear makeup if she has always used it. If needed, help her put on powder and lipstick. Don't use eye makeup.
- Encourage a man to shave, and help him as needed. Use an electric razor for safety.
- Take the person to the barber or beauty shop. Some barbers or hairstylists may come to your home.
- Keep the person's nails clean and trimmed.

Dressing

People with Alzheimer's disease often need more time to dress. It can be hard for them to choose their clothes. They might wear the wrong clothing for the season. They also might wear colors that don't go together or forget to put on a piece of clothing. Allow the person to dress on his or her own for as long as possible.

Other tips for dressing:

- Lay out clothes in the order the person should put them on, such as underwear first, then pants, then a shirt, and then a sweater.
- Hand the person one thing at a time, or give step-by-step dressing instructions.
- Put away some clothes in another room to reduce the number of choices. Keep only one or two outfits in the closet or dresser.
- Keep the closet locked if needed.
- Buy three or four sets of the same clothes if the person wants to wear the same clothing every day.
- Buy loose-fitting, comfortable clothing, such as sports bras, cotton socks and underwear, and sweat pants and shorts with elastic waistbands.
- Avoid girdles, control-top pantyhose, knee-high nylons, high heels, and tight socks.
- Use Velcro® tape or large zipper pulls for clothing instead of shoelaces, buttons, or buckles.
- Try slip-on shoes that won't slide off or shoes with Velcro® straps.



For more caregiving tips and other resources:

- **Read** "Caring for a Person with Alzheimer's Disease": www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers/publication/caring-person-alzheimers-disease
- **Visit** www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers/topics/caregiving
- **Call** the ADEAR Center toll-free: 1-800-438-4380

The Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral (ADEAR) Center is a service of the National Institute on Aging, part of the National Institutes of Health. The Center offers information and publications for families, caregivers, and professionals about Alzheimer's disease and age-related cognitive changes.

