



For Immediate Release  
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## *Don't Sing the Holiday Blues: Alzheimer's Association Develops 10 Holiday Survival Tips for Families Coping with Alzheimer's*

Pinellas Park -- The holidays are times for family gatherings and happy memories, but for families caring for persons with memory related disorders like Alzheimer's disease the holidays may be a bittersweet experience, filled with stress and frustration. "Reducing stress is especially critical around the holidays," said Gloria J.T. Smith, CEO of the Alzheimer's Association, Florida Gulf Coast Chapter. "Preparing ALL family members and friends will allow for a more joyous and safe holiday season instead of coping with the holiday blues."

The Alzheimer's Association - Florida Gulf Coast Chapter - has developed 10 Holiday Survival Tips for families coping with Alzheimer's. *For a complete list go to [www.alz.org/FlGulfCoast](http://www.alz.org/FlGulfCoast) or call 727-578-2558.*

The Florida Gulf Coast chapter serves an estimated 187,000 persons living with Alzheimer's in 17 counties. There are only 8 states in the U.S. with more cases of Alzheimer's disease than are in the Florida Gulf Coast Chapter's service region.

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Below is a 282 word op-ed for Gloria Smith. Also see  
[http://www.alz.org/flgulfcoast/in\\_my\\_community\\_education.asp](http://www.alz.org/flgulfcoast/in_my_community_education.asp)

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## *10 Holiday Survival Tips for Families coping with Alzheimer's*

The holidays are times for family gatherings and happy memories, but it can also be a bittersweet experience, filled with stress and frustration. The festivities can agitate and confuse person with dementia. Caregivers can feel anxious, frustrated and lonely – leading to stress and depression. Visiting families can feel a sense of loss because of the changes in the person's behavior. The Alzheimer's Association - Florida Gulf Coast Chapter - has developed 10 Holiday Survival Tips for families coping with Alzheimer's. *For a complete list go to [www.alz.org/FlGulfCoast](http://www.alz.org/FlGulfCoast).*

- 1. Plan** holiday celebrations with relatives in advance.
- 2. Take care of yourself:** Set limits with family to reduce stress. Attend support groups.
- 3. Prepare the person with Alzheimer's for a family gathering.** Show photos of family members who will be visiting.
- 4. Familiarize family members** with behavior and condition changes.
- 5. If possible, involve the person with dementia** in activities.
- 6. Communicate with success:** Avoid criticism and arguing. For example, when someone forgets a recent conversation, avoid saying, "Don't you remember?"
- 7. Give useful gifts** such as the Medic Alert® + Alzheimer's Association Safe Return® identification bracelet. Other gifts may include: comfortable clothing, favorite music, and photo albums.
- 8. Safe environment:** Accommodate changes in vision by placing contrasting-color rugs in front of doors or steps; avoid dark-colored rugs that may appear as "holes." Avoid using candies or artificial fruits as decorations.
- 9 -- Travel wisely** by never leaving the person alone. Advise service staff that you are traveling with someone with dementia.
- 10 – Utilize reliable sources:** Contact the Alzheimer's Association at 727-578-2558 or the 24/7 confidential *Helpline* at 1-800-272-3900 to answer questions about warning signs and to provide assistance to families.

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*Gloria Smith, CEO, Florida Gulf Coast Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, serving 17 Gulf Coast counties with an estimated 187,000 persons living with Alzheimer's disease.*