

Sundowning—Caregiver Tips

Behavior problems may worsen in the late afternoon and evening, possibly because after a day's activities, everyone is tired and less able to handle stress. This symptom is evidenced by increasing confusion, agitation and anxiety, along with pacing, wandering, wringing hands, and intensification of any behavior problem.

Suggestions:

- Rearrange the person's daily schedule so that fewer major activities take place in the evening (i.e., have bath and main family meal during the day.)
- Schedule appointments and trips for the earlier part of the day.
- Reduce hustle-bustle in the evening, such as T.V., and family or other social activities.
- Alternate activity with programmed rest if coping abilities appear consumed by normal activities.
- Observe situations to determine if there is a specified cause for the behavior
- Allow person to pace in visible, secure area. Do not restrain. Take for a walk, if possible.
- Offer companionship.
- Use beanbag chairs when pacing is not feasible. These chairs are difficult for the person to get out of and are more humane than using restraints.
- Increase security and comfort by offering stuffed animals, soothing music, and the opportunity for a favorite activity.
- Try to remember that the patient does not have control over their behavior. This annoying behavior is the inability of his brain to sort out a confusing environment.
- Do not argue with the patient.
- Do not ask the patient to explain what is bothering him; he doesn't know and can't tell you.

Delusions and Hallucinations

Delusions are defined as fixed or persistent incorrect beliefs that explanations or reality will not change. These are not uncommon experiences for an Alzheimer's victim. Neither are hallucinations, which are the experience of hearing or seeing things that cannot be verified. Visual or auditory sensations may be distorted in the brain, causing distorted perceptions.

Suggestions:

- Do not argue or try to convince the person that the belief is incorrect.
- Reassure and distract when a hallucination or delusion is frightening.
- Help the person to see and hear as clearly as possible.
- Reduce clutter and shadows in room of patient.

Tips for Alzheimer's Patients who get Agitated at Sundown

1. Plan activities of the day so that there is less to do in late afternoon.
2. Schedule appointments and trips for the earlier part of the day.
3. Play quiet music in the afternoon instead of loud T.V.
4. Try to remember that the patient does not have control over his behavior; their annoying behavior is the inability of his brain to sort out a confusing environment.
5. Try to make the patient feel secure and well protected.
6. Never restrain any patient unless absolutely needed.
7. Do not argue with the patient.
8. Do not ask the patient to explain what is bothering him; he doesn't know and can't tell you.
9. Be sure the patient is getting enough exercise during the day.
10. If the patient is restless, try to get them interested in some quiet activity, e.g. folding towels.

Courtesy [How to Care for the Alzheimer's disease Patient](#)