

Scams, Fraud, Crime

Many individuals are taken advantage of and/or become targets for financial exploitation, robbery, purse snatching, car theft, home repair scams, phone solicitors, and even burglars. Because of their vulnerability, people with Alzheimer's disease hold a higher risk of being victims of scams, fraud, and crime. Although you may not be able to protect your loved one from all scams or intruders, you can take some basic precautions:

- Put up a “no solicitation” sign on the outside entrance.
- Call the national “Do Not Call” Registry (1.888.382.1222).
- Remove a person's name from the credit bureau's mailing list. Call the Consumer Credit and Reporting Industry at (1.888.567.8688).
- Register with the Direct Marketing Association (DMA), www.dmachoice.org. “...registering won't eliminate unwanted mail but can reduce it.”

Internet Resources for Fraud Safety:

- **Federal Trade Commission**—information about different types of scams and how to recognize these scams. The website has a link to report phone fraud (the complaint will help law enforcement officials find and stop the scam artists. (<http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0076-phone-scams>)
- **Federal Bureau of Investigation**—government website that helps to recognize common fraud schemes dealing with senior citizens. (<https://www.fbi.gov/scams-safety/fraud/seniors/>)

Five Types of Fraud

1. Identity Theft

This theft includes stealing Social Security numbers, credit and debit cards, personal records, and anything else that gives them access to your personal information and accounts.

Protect Yourself: Never carry your Social Security number with you, and provide it only if absolutely necessary. Shred personal information before you dispose of it. Keep your computer security and anti-virus software up-to-date. And never click on pop-up ads or links in unsolicited emails.

2. Phishing

This is a form of identity theft where criminals try to “hook” you into giving personal information online. A pop-up, an email or a website can appear to come from a business or an organization with which you regularly interact.

Protect Yourself: Never respond to unsolicited emails asking for personal information. If you have a question about such a request, contact the organization through the phone number or email address listed on its website. Delete suspicious emails without opening them.

3. The Grandparent Scam

A caller pretends to be a grandchild urgently needing funds due to an emergency, such as an accident or arrest in a foreign country. **More on the grandparent scam further in this packet*

Protect Yourself: Confirm the story before you send money- ask the caller a question he or she should be able to answer. Also, ask family members about the grandchild's whereabouts or call the grandchild back at a number you already have rather than one supplied by the caller.

4. Inheritance Scams

Someone posing as an attorney wants to give you his deceased client's fortune. However, the attorney, the deceased, and the fortune are all fraudulent.

Protect Yourself: Never pay money in order to get money- you should not have to pay exorbitant fees upfront to gain an inheritance. If you believe this offer is genuine, discuss it with a family member or trusted friend to gain an outside perspective.

5. Lottery Scams

Someone notifies you that you have won a lottery- but you don't recall entering any lotteries. Some lottery scams even indicate sponsorship by famous people or legitimate companies to boost their status.

Protect Yourself: If it sounds too good to be true, it usually is. Be cautious of unsolicited letters, phone calls, or emails informing you of instant wealth. If the offer sounds suspicious, trust your instincts. When in doubt, don't do it

Guide to the Grandparent Scam

The grandparent scam is one of the most common and prevalent scams affecting elders today. It plays off the deep emotional bond between grandparents and their grandkids to rip off elders who want to help.

Dead Giveaways that it is a Scam:

- Asking for money.
- Asking the adult to keep it a secret.
Ex: "Please don't tell mom and dad!"
- Creating urgency or hurrying the adult.
- Asking the adult to wire money overseas or put it on a prepaid card.
- Other variations may include the caller saying they are another relative, an attorney, or law enforcement official contacting the adult because of a legal or health problem such as the grandchild being in jail or the hospital.

Tips for Handling the Scam

- Ask the caller a question he/she should be able to answer, such as the name of a family member or pet.
- Don't fall for the urgency. Take your time, let the emotion pass and remember, "reach out to check it out."
- Be careful what you say at the beginning of the call- don't give the scammer any information they can use against you.
- Ask other family members whether the grandchild is really outside the country.
- Call the grandchildren at a number you have for them, rather than the number the scammer gives you.

If you do happen to wire or send any money, don't get down on yourself; **tell someone you trust**. They can help you stop any more losses. Remember that these crimes thrive in secrecy, so ask for help. Also, remember to tell your family and friends about the call and notify your local law enforcement officers so they can help you to spread the word.

Helpful Resources

AARP Fraud Watch Network

www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud

Credit Monitoring Services: Equifax,
800.525.6285; Experian,
888.397.3742; TransUnion. 800.680.7289

Federal Trade Commission- Info on different types of scams and how to recognize them. Link to report phone fraud

www.ftc.gov, 877.382.4357

Social Security Administration Fraud Hotline

800.269.0271

Internet Crime Complaint Center

www.ic3.gov

IRS Fraud Hotline

1.888.482.6825

Federal Bureau of Investigation- Government website that helps to recognize common fraud schemes dealing with seniors www.fbi.gov

Electronic Tracking Device Technology

Freedom GPS Locator Watch

Phone: 952-457-3401
Website: www.rmmedicalsales.com/Freedom.html

Freedom GPS Locator Watch is both an alarm and location management device that sets virtual boundaries in and outdoors using a portable receiver. If crossed, or in an emergency, the Freedom watch sets off an alarm on the receiver and turns into a personal locator that works with a smartphone or computer from any geographic location in the world.

GoSafe

Phone: (855) 681-5351
Website: <https://www.lifeline.philips.com/safety-solutions/gosafe.html>

GoSafe Medical Alert system acts as a personal emergency response system from Philips Lifeline and worn as a pendant.

GPS SmartSole

Phone: 877-489-3019
Website: gpsSMARTSOLE.com

The patented GPS SmartSole™ features a miniaturized GPS tracking chip embedded in the insoles of most shoes and powered by a rechargeable battery that lasts up to 5 days on a single charge.

PocketFinder + Personal Tracker

Website: <http://pocketfinder.com/gpsseniortracker/>

PocketFinder GPS Senior Tracker helps families monitor loved ones and comfortably fits into pants or jacket pockets, or strapped to a belt. Pocket finder has the functionality to serve as a personal tracker and also has a GPS vehicle tracker.

Project Lifesaver - Chesapeake, VA 23322

Phone: 757-546-5502
Website: www.projectlifesaver.org

Project Lifesaver is a nationwide Tracking program. PAL (Protect and Locate) is a digital sports watch device and is designed to be worn on the wrist. The PAL device can be tracked outdoors by a portable hand-held receiver through the use of GSM/GPS technologies.

Revolutionary Tracker

Phone: 212-249-7807
Website: <https://matt81853.wixsite.com/website>

Revolutionary Tracker is a wearable wrist-watch that serves as a personal locator using GPS, mobile technology.

The Alzheimer's Association does not recommend or endorse any of these products or services. We are providing this information to callers as a resource. We encourage anyone considering these products to research it thoroughly.

Safe Link (GPS watch)

Website: <http://safelinkgps.com/>

Safelink is a GPS technology watch that utilizes a cloud based backend to provide 24/7 real-time tracking for families.

SafetyNet by LoJack

Phone: 877-434-6384
Website: <https://safetynettracking.com/>

The SafetyNet Tracking™ Systems bracelet is easy to use and utilizes (RF) Radio Frequency technology that can work in places such as a densely wooded area, buildings and shallow water.

Spark 5.0 Nano GPS Tracker (Persons and Vehicles)

Phone Number: (800) 654-7966
Website: <http://www.brickhousesecurity.com/category/gps+tracking/personal+gps+tracking.do>

The Spark Nano GPS is customizable, weather-resistant tracking device. This battery-powered GPS trackers provides real-time location viewing from a computer, tablet or smartphone with webcam access.

Tracking GPS Watch - MX-LOCare™

Website: <http://www.alzstore.com/gps-tracking-watch-elderly-mx-locare-p/0940.htm>

The MX-LOCare™ Wandering GPS Watch uses GPS, Cellular and Wifi technology to track a wearer's geographic location with a pre-configured SIM card.

TriLOC personal locator

Phone: 800-700-6758
Website: <http://www.smarthomesnc.com/smart-living>

TriLOC has multiple features available, included are: satellite, A-GPS technology, bluetooth compatibility, a lockable strap with tamper alert, two-way voice capabilities, SOS Emergency button, and fall detection alert.

The Alzheimer's Store, GPS Tracking Devices

Phone: (800) 752-3238
Website: www.alzstore.com

The Alzheimer's Store carries a wide selection of products, i.e., GPS Tracking Devices, wall clocks, therapeutic dolls, automatic pill dispenser, home safety devices and more.

Questions to ask about Tracking Device Technology

1. What form of technology supports the device?
I.e., RF or GPS?
2. What affect will inclement weather, power outages or loss of cellular/GPS signal play on the effectiveness of the product?
3. Does the product have a limitation as to the distance it can track the person with dementia?
4. Will the terrain of their environment affect the function of the product?
 - City buildings
 - Mountain regions
 - Rural areas
 - Near a large body of water
5. Does the product work if the person with dementia leaves their home environment?
 - Vacation (i.e., international travel, on a cruise)
 - Visits to homes of friends or other family members (in/out state)
 - Trips to the store, appointments, walk throughout the neighborhood
6. Will the product be able to track the person with dementia should they utilize various types of transportation when wandering?
 - Train/Subway
 - Bus
 - Car
 - Plane
 - Boat
7. What is the life expectancy of the battery?
 - How often does it need to be changed and/or charged?
 - How much does a battery cost?
 - What type of warranty do you offer for batteries?
8. Is the product water resistant?
9. What is the size of the device?
 - Height/weight (large or small)
 - Length/width
10. What is the cost of the product?
 - Purchase cost?
 - Monthly fee/annual contract?
 - Is leasing available?
11. Are there any special features the product has?
 - Different Languages available
 - Time and Date display (i.e., analog or digital)
 - SOS/Panic Alert Button
 - Webcam accessibility
 - Fall Detection
 - Over the air software update, (i.e., iCloud, email, or text messages)
 - Data reports of any kind?
12. Where and how does the PWD (person with dementia) use the device?
 - Does he/she carry it? Wear it?
 - It is difficult/easy to remove?
13. Can we customize the GPS device with engraved text?
 - Emergency number/contact?
 - Person with dementia's name
14. What if I don't have a smartphone or laptop to access my loved one's location should he or she wander? What are alternative services?
 - Is there a number I can call to locate person with dementia
 - Is my phone/computer compatible with your services
 - Or an outlet store I can visit
15. Do you work with local Police Department/s in my state or county?

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Wandering and getting lost: Who's at risk and how to be prepared

Alzheimer's disease causes people to lose their ability to recognize familiar places and faces. It's common for a person living with dementia to wander or become lost or confused about their location, even in the early stage. Six in 10 people living with dementia will wander at least once; many do so repeatedly. Although common, wandering can be dangerous — even life-threatening — and the stress of this risk weighs heavily on caregivers and family.

Who's at risk for wandering?

Everyone living with Alzheimer's or another dementia is at risk for wandering.

Common signs a person may be at risk of wandering include:

- Returning from a regular walk or drive later than usual.
- Forgetting how to get to familiar places.
- Talking about fulfilling former obligations, such as going to work.
- Trying or wanting to “go home” even when at home.
- Becoming restless, pacing or making repetitive movements.
- Having difficulty locating familiar places, such as the bathroom, bedroom or dining room.
- Asking the whereabouts of past friends and family.
- Acting as if doing a hobby or chore, but nothing gets done.
- Appearing lost in a new or changed environment.
- Becoming nervous or anxious in crowded areas, such as markets or restaurants.

Reduce the risk of wandering

The following tips may help reduce the risk of wandering and can bring peace of mind to caregivers and family members; however, these actions cannot guarantee that a person living with dementia won't wander.

- Provide opportunities for the person to engage in structured, meaningful activities throughout the day.
- Identify the time of day the person is most likely to wander (for those who experience “sundowning,” this may be starting in the early evening.) Plan things to do during this time — activities and exercise may help reduce anxiety, agitation and restlessness.
- Ensure all basic needs are met, including toileting, nutrition and hydration. Consider reducing – but not eliminating – liquids up to two hours before

bedtime so the person doesn't have to use and find the bathroom during the night.

- Involve the person in daily activities, such as folding laundry or preparing dinner.
- Reassure the person if he or she feels lost, abandoned or disoriented.
- If the person is still safely able to drive, consider using a GPS device to help if they get lost.
- If the person is no longer driving, remove access to car keys — a person living with dementia may not just wander by foot. The person may forget that he or she can no longer drive.
- Avoid busy places that are confusing and can cause disorientation, such as shopping malls.
- Assess the person's response to new surroundings. Do not leave someone with dementia unsupervised if new surroundings may cause confusion, disorientation or agitation.

For individuals in the early stage of the disease and their care partners, the following strategies may also help reduce the risk of wandering or getting lost:

- Decide on a set time each day to check in with each other.
- Review scheduled activities and appointments for the day together.
- If the care partner is not available, identify a companion for the person living with dementia as needed.
- Consider alternative transportation options if getting lost or driving safely becomes a concern.

Prepare your home

As the disease progresses and the risk for wandering increases, assess your individual situation to see which of the safety measures below may work best to help prevent wandering.

- Place deadbolts out of the line of sight, either high or low, on exterior doors. (Do not leave a person living with dementia unsupervised in new or changed surroundings, and never lock a person in at home.)
- Use night lights throughout the home.
- Cover door knobs with cloth the same color as the door or use safety covers.
- Camouflage doors by painting them the same color as the walls or covering them with removable curtains or screens.
- Use black tape or paint to create a two-foot black threshold in front of the door. It may act as a visual stop barrier.

- Install warning bells above doors or use a monitoring device that signals when a door is opened.
- Place a pressure-sensitive mat in front of the door or at the person's bedside to alert you to movement.
- Put hedges or a fence around the patio, yard or other outside common areas.
- Use safety gates or brightly colored netting to prevent access to stairs or the outdoors.
- Monitor noise levels to help reduce excessive stimulation.
- Create indoor and outdoor common areas that can be safely explored.
- Label all doors with signs or symbols to explain the purpose of each room.
- Store items that may trigger a person's instinct to leave, such as coats, hats, pocketbooks, keys and wallets.
- Do not leave the person alone in a car.

Plan ahead

- Consider enrolling in a wandering response service. Contact the **Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline (800.272.3900)** for more information.
- Ask neighbors, friends and family to call if they see the person wandering, lost or dressed inappropriately.
- Keep a recent, close-up photo of the person on hand to give to police, should the need arise.
- Know the person's neighborhood. Identify potentially dangerous areas near the home, such as bodies of water, open stairwells, dense foliage, tunnels, bus stops and roads with heavy traffic.
- Create a list of places the person might wander to, such as past jobs, former homes, places of worship or a favorite restaurant.

Take action when wandering occurs

- Start search efforts immediately. When looking, consider whether the individual is right- or left-handed — wandering patterns generally follow the direction of the dominant hand.
- Begin by looking in the surrounding vicinity — many individuals who wander are found within 1.5 miles of where they disappeared.
- Check local landscapes, such as ponds, tree lines or fence lines — many individuals are found within brush or brier.
- If applicable, search areas the person has wandered to in the past.
- If the person is not found within 15 minutes, call 911 to file a missing person's report. Inform the authorities that the person has dementia.

Resources

- Safety Resources ([alz.org/safety](https://www.alz.org/safety))
- Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline (800.272.3900)

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Medication safety

It's important for everyone who takes a medication to understand its purpose and proper usage. Additional measures may be needed to ensure individuals living with dementia take medications as directed. A plan to safely manage prescription and over-the-counter medications is critical to avoid medication-related problems.

Get the facts.

Currently, there is no medication that can prevent or cure Alzheimer's disease. There is one medication designed to address the progression of the disease, and multiple medications that may be prescribed to temporarily address symptoms of Alzheimer's or treat other conditions commonly associated with the diagnosis — such as depression, anxiety or sleeplessness. When a medication is prescribed or a supplement is recommended, it is important to get the facts about each treatment. This can help ensure you understand all the available options, benefits and risks.

Consider asking your doctor or pharmacist the following questions to help determine the best treatment plan:

- **Purpose of medication.**
What affect will the medication have on a person living with dementia, and are there any warning signs that would indicate the medication is not working as intended?
- **Side effects.**
What are the possible side effects of each medication? Which drug interactions may occur with current medications? Be sure that all members of the care team are aware of the medications prescribed.
- **Appropriate use.**
Medications should only be taken as directed. Ask about proper dosage amounts and delivery methods to maximize the effectiveness of the treatments and prevent accidental overdose. Some medications may be available in liquid form if the person has difficulty swallowing pills. Always consult with the prescribing physician or pharmacist before crushing or breaking pills.

Manage medications.

In the early stage of Alzheimer's disease, individuals are able to understand the use of medications and may use reminders such as pill organizers, sticky notes or calendars to independently manage medications. As the disease progresses, more assistance will be required to oversee and administer medications. If multiple medications have been prescribed for other serious health conditions, an organization system is essential to avoid missed or incorrect dosage that could lead to serious consequences.

Consider these tips when managing medications:

- **Stay organized.**
Use a pill box or organizer to sort medication by the day and time in which

they should be taken. A friend, family member or pharmacist may be able to assist with filling the organizer. If this support is not available, consider hiring a home health agency to assist with medication management.

- **Maintain medication records.**

Keep a written record of all current medications, including the name, dosage and starting date.

- **Develop a routine.**

Ask the pharmacist how medications should be taken — at a certain time of the day or with or without food. Then create a daily routine, such as taking medications with meals or before bed.

Avoid risk.

Consult with your doctor or pharmacist if you have questions or concerns about managing medications. Many problems can be prevented by considering the following tips:

- Do not take old medications; check expiration dates and follow instructions for safe disposal.
- Never share prescription medications with others.
- As the disease progresses, keep cabinets and medication storage secure to prevent accidental overdose.
- Keep the number of your local poison control center handy. If you suspect a medication overdose, call poison control or 911 before taking action.

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HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST

Individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are at increased risk for injury or harm in certain areas of the home. As the disease progresses, they may become unaware of the dangers that exist. Consider taking the following precautions to create a safe environment, which may prevent dangerous situations from occurring and help maximize the person's independence for as long as possible.



General Home Safety Tips

- Store potentially hazardous items, such as medication, alcohol, matches, sharp objects or small appliances and tools, in a securely locked cabinet.
- Keep all cleaning products, such as liquid laundry pacs and bleach, out of sight or secured to avoid possible ingestion of harmful chemicals.
- Keep the number for the local poison control center handy or saved in your phone in case of emergency.
- Make sure carbon monoxide and smoke detectors and fire extinguishers are available and inspected regularly. Replace batteries twice a year during daylight saving time.
- Remove tripping hazards, such as throw rugs, extension cords and excessive clutter.
- Keep walkways and rooms well lit.
- Secure large furniture, such as book shelves, cabinets or large TVs, to prevent tipping.
- Ensure chairs have arm rests to provide support when going from a sitting to standing position.
- Apply stickers to glass doors at eye level to ensure doors are visible.
- Install a latch or deadbolt either above or below eye level on all doors.
- Remove locks on interior doors to prevent the person living with dementia from locking themselves in.
- Consider removing firearms from the home or storing them in a locked cabinet.
- For more information, contact the **Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline (800.272.3900)**.



Kitchen

- Use appliances that have an auto shut-off feature.
- Prevent unsafe stove usage by applying stove knob covers, removing knobs or turning off the gas when the stove is not in use.
- Disconnect the garbage disposal.
- Mark food with purchase date; regularly check for and throw away expired items.
- Discard toxic plants and decorative fruits that may be mistaken for real food.
- Remove vitamins, prescription drugs, sugar substitutes and seasonings from the kitchen table and counters.



Laundry Room

- Clean out lint screens and dryer ducts regularly to prevent fires.
- Consider installing safety locks on washing machines and dryers to prevent inappropriate items being put in or taken out too early.
- Install locks on laundry chutes to avoid temptation to climb into or drop inappropriate items down the chute.
- Keep all cleaning products — such as liquid laundry pacs and bleach — out of sight, secured and in the original (not decorative) storage containers to discourage someone from eating or touching harmful chemicals.



Bathroom

- Install grab bars for the shower, tub and toilet to provide additional support.
- Set the water temperature at 120 degrees Fahrenheit or less to prevent scalding.
- Apply textured stickers to slippery surfaces to prevent falls.



Bedroom

- Closely monitor the use of an electric blanket, heater or heating pad to prevent burns or other injuries.
- Provide seating near the bed to help with dressing.
- Ensure closet shelves are at an accessible height so that items are easy to reach, which may prevent the person from climbing shelves or objects falling from overhead.



Garage and Basement

- Limit access to large equipment, such as lawn mowers, weed trimmers or snow blowers.
- Keep poisonous chemicals, such as gasoline or paint thinner, out of reach.
- Lock and properly store ladders when not in use to prevent a tripping or climbing hazard.
- Remove access to car keys if the individual living with dementia is no longer driving.
- Install a motion sensor on the garage door.
- Mark stairs with bright tape and ensure railings are sturdy and secure to prevent tripping or falls.

Home Safety Checklist made possible through a collaboration with Procter & Gamble.



Creating a Healthy and Safe Environment for Living with Dementia

Saturday, Feb. 4th, 2023

Other Resources

- Link to home modification video
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O4ODFRkOJ4Q>
- Alzheimer's Store <https://www.alzstore.com/Default.asp>
- Alzheimer's Association Safety Center
<https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/safety>
- 24/7 Wandering Support for a Safe Return:
<https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/safety/medicalert-with-24-7-wandering-support>
- 24/7 Helpline: 1-800-272-3900 or alz.org
- National Poison Control number: 1-800-222-1222 and poisonhelp.org