

Alzheimer's Disease Communication Tips

Communication is hard for people with Alzheimer's disease.
The person with Alzheimer's may have problems with:

- Finding the right word or losing his or her train of thought
- Understanding what words mean
- Paying attention during long conversations
- Remembering the steps in common activities, such as cooking a meal, or getting dressed
- Blocking out background noises from the radio, TV, or conversations
- Frustration if communication isn't working
- Being very sensitive to touch and to the tone and loudness of voices

You can encourage communication by:

- Making eye contact and calling the person by name
- Being aware of your tone, how loud your voice is, how you look at the person, and your body language
- Using other methods besides speaking, such as holding the person's hand while you talk
- Showing a warm, loving, matter-of-fact manner
- Being open to the person's concerns, even if he or she is hard to understand
- Allowing him or her to make some decisions and stay involved
- Staying patient with angry outbursts. Remember, it's the illness "talking."

To speak effectively with a person who has Alzheimer's:

- Offer simple, step-by-step instructions.
- Ask questions that limit the number of choices or that require a yes or no answer.
- Repeat instructions and allow more time for a response. Try not to interrupt.
- Use different words if he or she doesn't understand the first time.
- Don't talk about the person as if he or she isn't there.
- Don't talk to the person using "baby talk" or a "baby voice."



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