

What should I do if I have dementia?

It is important for you to keep both your mind and body active to prevent deterioration. Maintain an active lifestyle by eating healthy and exercising regularly. Engage yourself with mentally stimulating exercises. Ensure that your medical conditions are well controlled and that you are on regular follow up with your doctor.

1) Lead A Healthy Lifestyle

- Eat a balanced diet
- Limit alcohol intake and quit smoking
- Observe good sleep hygiene



2) Stay Physically Active

- Engage in group activity – tai chi, qigong, yoga, dancing
- Exercise regularly – brisk walking, swimming



3) Create A Safe Physical Environment

- Minimise clutter. Free living space prevents falls and head injuries
- Installing safety features at home as needed – grab bars, non-slip mats
- Keep frequently used items within easy reach



4) Create A Familiar And Structured Environment

- Sticking to same schedule daily will provide security and minimise confusion
- Reality Orientation – have a large calendar / clock on display
- Label drawers, cupboards (so items can be easily found)



5) Stimulate The Mind And Senses

Reminisce



- Old photographs, albums

Massage



- Essential Oils

Music



Mental Stimulation



- Choose something linked to preferences/previous occupation/habits
- Fun and interesting
- Short duration, alternate between activities
- To do at own pace

Examples:

- Games: Jigsaw puzzles, Crossword puzzles, Sudoku, Board games, Bingo, Mahjong, Simple memory/card games, Dominoes, Jenga
- Art-related: Handicrafts, Crochet, Painting/colouring, Floral arrangement, Origami paper folding, Calligraphy
- Others: Simple cooking/baking, Sing-along sessions

6) Take Your Prescribed Medications Regularly

- Good control of cardiovascular risk factors (e.g. Diabetes, Hypertension, High cholesterol) is crucial
- There are also medications that may help to enhance your memory. These medications aim to slow the progression of dementia, so as to preserve everyday functioning

Cholinesterase inhibitors

- Donepezil (Aricept)
- Rivastigmine (Exelon)
- Galantamine (Reminyl)

Others

- Memantine (Ebixa)

Tips to remember:

- Use a pillbox
- Set reminders on phone or calendar
- Keep a diary of events and appointments and check it daily

NB: **Insufficient Evidence** for use of supplements such as Gingko Biloba, Omega-3-Fatty Acids.

How can you help your loved one with dementia?

Caregivers play a monumental role in patients with dementia. They are the physical, emotional and mental support for such patients. They devote a large part of their lives to caring for someone other than themselves.


Caring for someone with dementia can be a difficult job at times. Obtaining the right skills will help caregivers increase their confidence, sense of situational control and reduce overall stress.

It is also important that as a caregiver, you do not neglect your own health and personal issues.

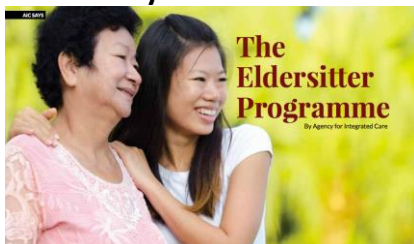
Be aware of the resources in the community that are available to you, should you require them.

For information on Caregiver training, see ADA brochure on Caregiver Support and Training



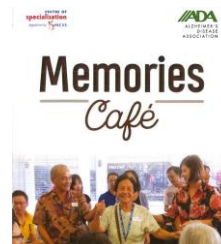
Persons With Dementia	Caregivers
<p>Making the person feel valued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make time to listen, have regular chats • Show affection • Let the person continue to do manageable tasks and activities that he/she enjoys • Encourage them • Do things with them (rather than for them) • Allow them to make their own simple choices • Respecting privacy <p>Mental Stimulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientate the person everyday • Go for outings • Encourage leisure activities • Encourage reminiscence • Encourage social engagement <p>Activities to explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go on community outings to places of interest • Look at photographs of the past • Have objects or activities that are from person's past • Join group activities to encourage social interaction • Physical activities to maintain fitness for strength and balance (tai chi, walking) 	<p>Are you stressed? Identify it early!</p> <p>Caregiver support services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alzheimer's Disease Association • AWWA Centre for Caregivers • Care Corner Family Service Centre (Toa Payoh) • O'Joy Care Services • Touch Caregiver Support <p>Coping strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be realistic about what you can do • Take care of your own health • Eat well, get adequate exercise and rest • Learn relaxation techniques • Take a break every day • Talk to someone every day • Give yourself a treat at least once a month • Make use of community resources • Join caregiver support groups (see ADA brochure) • Ask for help! 

Community Resources



Eldersitter Programme

- Cognitive and physical stimulation for dementia patients
- Respite for caregivers



Memories Cafe

- 2 hour programme with engagement activities for patients with dementia

For more resources, please ask our nurses or refer to the ADA website and HPB Brochure on "Understanding Dementia".