



Medicare Open Enrollment

Medicare Open Enrollment is from **October 15-December 7**

Counselors from The NC Dept. of Insurance **Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP)** are an unbiased source to assist you with your Medicare needs. The Randolph County SHIIP Coordinators are available all year long; and especially during Open Enrollment to check your plan for 2023. SHIIP Counselors are available Monday-Thursday, 8:30am-4:00pm, for help in person or by phone.

To review your plan, we need a current list of your prescriptions and Medicare card information. We may also need a list of your doctors. We will then discuss with you the search results.

It is so important to check your plan during Open Enrollment. Each year plans can have changes in premium, deductible, drug copays, medical coverage, doctor network, or extra benefits. You don't want to find yourself stuck in a plan that doesn't meet your needs. This simple inconvenience may save you a great deal of money and aggravation in 2023.

Randolph County SHIIP Coordinators
Margie DiDona and Lisa Alley can be reached by:

Phone: 336-625-3389 Margie x235 Lisa x237

Email: rcsaa2@senioradults.org (Margie)
rcsaa@senioradults.org (Lisa)

Mail or in-person: Randolph Senior Adults Association
347 W. Salisbury Street
Asheboro, NC 27203

New to family caregiving?

Learn as much as you can about your family member's illness or disability and how to care for it. The more you know, the less anxiety you'll feel about your new role and the more effective you'll be.

Seek out other caregivers. It helps to know you're not alone. It's comforting to give and receive support from others who understand exactly what you're going through.

Trust your instincts. Remember, you know your family member best. Don't ignore what doctors and specialists tell you, but listen to your gut, too.

Encourage your loved one's independence. Caregiving does not mean doing everything for your loved one. Be open to technologies and strategies that allow your family member to remain as independent as possible.

Know your limits. Be realistic about how much of your time and yourself you can give. Set clear limits, and communicate those limits to doctors, family members, and other people involved.



RESOURCES

NC Stroke Association
336-713-5052
ncstroke.org

National Stroke Association
888-4STROKE (888-478-7653)
stroke.org

American Diabetes Association
800-DIABETES (800-342-2383)
diabetes.org

The Foundation for Peripheral Neuropathy
877-883-9942
www.foundationforpn.org

National Kidney Foundation
800-622-9010
kidney.org

Arthritis Foundation
800-283-7800
arthritis.org

Parkinson's Foundation
1-800-473-4636
parkinson.org

Anxiety & Depression Association of America
1-240-485-1001
adaa.org

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
Main - nami.org 800-950-6264
NC - naminc.org 800-451-9682

Caregiver Action Network
Online Instructional Videos for Caregivers
caregiveraction.org

Family Caregiver Alliance
Online information and resources for caregivers
caregiver.org

Family Caregiving
aarp.org/caregiving/



The Nurturer



A Newsletter for Family Caregivers in Randolph County Issue 17 - Sept. 2022



Seasonal Fun

Fall brings such beautiful colors and fun opportunities for crafts!

Autumn is the perfect time to make a pretty centerpiece that will last all season and throughout the holidays. Gather leaves, twigs, pumpkins, nuts and anything else that makes you happy to create a decoration for your dining room or living room table. Maybe include some old photos to give it that personal touch.

It will bring a festive atmosphere to your home and also bring happy memories of working together to create something so nice!

Free copies of *The Nurturer* can be picked up at all Randolph Senior Adult Association locations, Randolph Health, Regional Consolidated Services and other community sites. *The Nurturer* is also available online a www.senioradults.org.

To receive free quarterly copies of *The Nurturer* in the mail or email, call 336-625-3389 or email: rcsaa2@senioradults.org to be added to our mailing list.

Follow Randolph Senior Adults Association On Facebook



6 Falls Prevention Steps to Help Your Older Loved Ones

Did you know that one in four older Americans falls every year? Falls are the leading cause of both fatal and nonfatal injuries for people aged 65+. Falls can result in hip fractures, broken bones, and head injuries. And even falls without a major injury can cause an older adult to become fearful or depressed, making it difficult for them to stay active. If you have an aging parent, grandparent, or neighbor in your life, helping them reduce their risk of falling is a great way to help them stay healthy and independent for as long as possible.

6 STEPS TO REDUCING THE RISK OF FALLS

- 1. Enlist their support in taking simple steps to stay safe.** Ask your older loved one if they are concerned about falling. If they're concerned about falling, dizziness, or balance, suggest that they discuss it with their health care provider who can assess their risk and suggest programs or services that could help.
- 2. Discuss their current health conditions.** Find out if your older loved one is experiencing any problems with managing their own health. Are they having trouble remembering to take their medications—or are they experiencing side effects? Is it getting more difficult for them to do things they used to do easily? Also make sure they're taking advantage of all the preventive benefits now offered under Medicare, such as the Annual Wellness visit. Encourage them to speak openly with their health care provider about all of their concerns.
- 3. Ask about their last eye checkup.** If your older loved one wears glasses, make sure they have a current prescription and they're using the glasses as advised by their eye doctor. Remember that using tint-changing lenses can be hazardous when going from bright sun into darkened buildings and homes. A simple strategy is to change glasses upon entry or stop until their lenses adjust. Bifocals also can be problematic on stairs, so it's important to be cautious.
- 4. Notice if they're holding onto walls, furniture, or someone else when walking or having difficulty walking or arising from a chair.** These are all signs that it might be time to see a physical therapist. A trained physical therapist can help your older loved one improve their balance, strength, and gait through exercise. They might also suggest a cane or walker—and provide guidance on how to use these aids. Make sure to follow their advice. Poorly fit aids actually can increase the risk of falling.
- 5. Talk about their medications.** If your older loved one is having a hard time keeping track of medicines or is experiencing side effects, encourage them to discuss their concerns with their doctor or pharmacist. Suggest that they have their medications reviewed each time they get a new prescription. Also, beware of non-prescription medications that contain sleep aids—including painkillers with "PM" in their names. These can lead to balance issues and dizziness. If your older loved one is having sleeping problems, encourage them to talk to their doctor or pharmacist about safer alternatives.
- 6. Do a walk-through safety assessment of their home.** There are many simple and inexpensive ways to make a home safer. For professional assistance, consult an Occupational Therapist.
 - Lighting:** Increase lighting throughout the house, especially at the top and bottom of stairs. Ensure that lighting is readily available when getting up in the middle of the night.
 - Stairs:** Make sure there are two secure rails on all stairs.
 - Bathrooms:** Install grab bars in the tub/shower and near the toilet. Make sure they're installed where your older loved one would actually use them. For even greater safety, consider using a shower chair and hand-held shower.
 A variety of community-based programs, like A Matter of Balance, Stepping On, and Tai Chi, can help older adults learn how to reduce their risk of falling.

Goodbye Summer,
Hello Fall!

**RANDOLPH SENIOR ADULTS
LOCATIONS**

ASHEBORO SENIOR CENTER
RANDOLPH SENIOR ADULTS MAIN OFFICE
 The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Adult
 Resource & Education Center
 347 W. Salisbury Street
 Asheboro, NC 27203
 336-625-3389 or 1-800-252-2899

ARCHDALE SENIOR CENTER
 108 Park Drive
 Archdale, NC 27263
 336-431-1938

RANDLEMAN SENIOR CENTER
 144 W. Academy Street
 Randleman, NC 27317
 336-498-4332

LIBERTY SENIOR CENTER
 128 S. Fayetteville Street
 Liberty, NC 27298
 336-622-5844

OUR PLACE ADULT DAY CARE
 714 Farr Street
 Asheboro, NC 27203
 336-629-3787

RCATS TRANSPORTATION
 347 W. Salisbury Street
 Asheboro, NC 27203
 Randolph County - 336-629-7433
 Montgomery County - 910-572-3430

Check Out Our Facebook Page



JOIN US AT THE MOVIES!



**FREE
Over 50***

**Upcoming Movies . . .
. . . at the SUNSET THEATRE**

****No Movie for September****

**October 6
The Shootist (1976)**

**November 3
Magnificent Obsession (1954)**

**December 1
Remember the Night (1940)**

Doors open at 12:00 - Movie starts at 1:00

***Free admission, popcorn & small soda for those 50+**

The Family Caregiver Support Program (FCSP) offers services and support for caregivers. The FCSP's goal is to provide family caregivers with the needed support to reduce depression, anxiety, and stress and enable them to provide care longer, thereby avoiding or delaying the need for costly institutional care.

The Randolph County FCSP Subcommittee meets three times per year to discuss what services will help the caregivers in our county, and how best to spend FCSP funds to serve them.



If you would like to join the Randolph County FCSP Subcommittee, please contact:

Margie DiDona
Randolph Senior Adults Association, Inc.
 336-625-3389 x235
 rcsaa2@senioradults.org

**65+? Lonely?
Need to talk?**

NCBAM's Hope Line is here for you!

866-578-4673

NORTH CAROLINA BAPTIST AGING MINISTRY

Look at these helpful gadgets we found . . .



HandyBar Auto Standing Aid

This removable handle fits securely into almost all driver or passenger side car doors. It's a non-slip grip hand-hold that lets seniors boost themselves up and out of the car. The shorter portion of the "L" shoves down into the U-shaped latch attached to the doorjamb on most cars. The longer, padded portion sticks out at a right angle, providing a grab handle to help a person rise from or lower into a seat. Remove and stow the bar to close the door. Small enough to fit into a coat pocket or purse, the assist bar easily can be carried from car to car and used on either side of a vehicle. It can handle up to 350 pounds.



Seat Swivel Cushion

This cushion has a base that swivels. Seniors can simply sit down into the car's seat, then easily swivel to pull their legs into the car. This eliminates the struggle to move their legs into the car while turning their body. It also makes it much easier for the person who's helping them into the car. Tip: If the car has bucket seats, measure to see if the swivel cushion will fit. Or, place a towel on the car's seat to fill the gap and allow the cushion to sit flat.

These items can be purchased at Walmart, Target, Home Depot and Amazon.

REDUCING FRUSTRATIONS

It can be extremely frustrating to a person living with dementia to no longer be able to complete formerly simple tasks. It is our job to help reduce this frustration by setting them up for success. By establishing a daily routine, your loved one will know what to expect and what is expected of them. Completing the same tasks in the same order each day will help. For instance, using the bathroom first thing in the morning, then brushing teeth, washing their face, and then getting dressed.

Create a routine that is in the same order they did these tasks themselves before they had dementia. If your husband always shaved before brushing his teeth, or your mother put her pants on before her shirt; follow their lead. You will have better success if you follow what comes naturally to them since they have performed these tasks in a particular order for decades.



SUPPORT GROUPS

In-person groups may be cancelled or virtual due to COVID, call group contact for more information

Diabetes Support Group
 Third Monday each month - 4:00-5:00pm
 Randolph Health
 208-D Foust Street, Asheboro
 336-625-9400

Alzheimer's Support Group
 Second Thursday of each month - 6:30 pm
 Cross Road Village Clubhouse
 1302 Old Cox Road, Asheboro
 Bernie Raymond - 336-629-7811

Asheboro Parkinson's Support Group
 Second Friday of each month - 10:30 am
 Hospice of Randolph
 416 Vision Drive, Asheboro
 Annette Caughron - 336-580-9937 or 629-6397

Support Services for the Blind
 Third Wednesday each month - 2:30pm
 (April-October)
 Randolph Senior Adults Association
 347 W. Salisbury Street, Asheboro
 Christina Sterling - 336-683-8107

Dementia Support Group
 Brighton Gardens of Greensboro
 1208 New Garden Road, Greensboro
 Call for more information
 336-297-4700 x232

Duke Dementia Family Support Program
Various Support Groups via Zoom
 Various dates and times
 Natalie Leary - 919-660-7542
 dukefamilysupport.org/support-groups/



**DOES YOUR LOVED ONE DRINK
NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS?**

As a caregiver, you may be eligible to receive a case each month of the nutritional supplement used by your care recipient.

**For more information, contact
Margie DiDona or Lisa Alley
at Randolph Senior Adults Assn
336-625-3389**

Funds provided by the Family Caregiver Support Program



Family Caregiver Support Program provides a range of supports that assist family caregivers

Eligible family caregivers are:

- A caregiver of any age providing care for an older adult age 60 or older or providing care for a person with Alzheimer's disease or related brain disorder.
- A caregiver (who is not the birth or adoptive parent) age 55 or older, raising a related child age 18 and younger or an adult with a disability.
- A caregiver age 55 or older (including parents) who provides care for a related adult with a disability.

RANDOLPH COUNTY AGENCIES PROVIDING SERVICES WITH FCSP FUNDS:

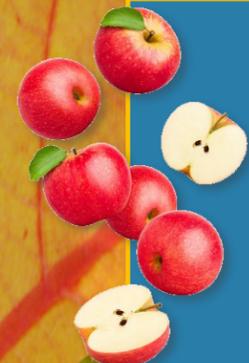
Randolph Senior Adults Association provides Care Planning Assistance, The Powerful Tools for Caregivers workshop, Caregiver Skills Class, *The Nurturer* newsletter, and Liquid Nutritional Supplements.

Call Margie DiDona or Lisa Alley at 336-625-3389 for more information.

Regional Consolidated Services offers caregiver respite care to provide temporary relief for the family caregiver.

Contact Teri Mabry at 336-629-5141.

CAREGIVER TIPS



Agree never Argue
 Ask never Command
 Distract never Shame
 Reinforce never Force
 Redirect never Reason
 Reassure never Lecture
 Encourage never Condescend
 Repeat never Say "I told you"
 Reminisce never Say Remember
 Say "Do what you can" never Say "You can't"

- ● ● Randolph Health
- ● ● StayWell
- ● ● Senior Care

What is StayWell Senior Care?

StayWell Senior Care is a certified PACE Program (A Program of All Inclusive Care for the Elderly) providing an alternative to nursing home placement. StayWell Senior Care allows individuals in need of skilled nursing care to remain in their home or community setting and receive quality care from a team of clinical experts.

How to Qualify?

Residents of Randolph, Moore, and Montgomery counties who are certified by the State of NC to require nursing home care are eligible for StayWell Senior Care services. Participants must be 55 or older and able to live safely in the community at the time of enrollment.

Contact Us

To learn more about PACE in Randolph, Montgomery, and Moore counties contact:

StayWell Senior Care
 809 Curry Drive, Asheboro, NC 27205
 336.628.4200 | For TTY, please call 336.275.8878

Technology Classes for Seniors

Randolph Senior Adults is hosting interactive technology classes (Android and Apple) for seniors 60+.

No more waiting on someone to help you send a message, share a picture or celebrate a special day. Learn to use your smart phone and/or tablet to connect more easily with grandkids, family, friends and healthcare professionals!

- Two classes per week for four weeks (total of 8 classes)
- Classes are approximately one hour
- Class size is smaller to allow for one-on-one instruction and social distancing
- Through grant funds we have purchased devices to use in class. However, if you own a smart phone or tablet, you can bring it with you to learn how to use yours.
- Classes are available at all four Senior Centers

Call your local Senior Center to register!



EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is an interactive workshop that helps family caregivers reduce stress, improve self-confidence, communicate better, balance their lives, and increase their ability to make tough decisions. When caregivers take care of themselves it benefits their care recipient. This workshop consists of six sessions held once a week. All participants receive *The Caregiver Helpbook*, developed specifically for this program.

Next workshop in Spring 2023

Caregiver Skills Class - During this two-hour class therapists will train family caregivers on how to provide physical care; such as the correct way to transfer someone from a bed to a wheelchair, personal care, fall prevention, how to properly use medical equipment, etc. Each participant receives a free copy of *The Caregiver's Handbook*, a practical, visual guide for the home caregiver.

Next workshop in Spring 2023

Contact Margie DiDona or Lisa Alley at 336-625-3389 to register or to get more information on these programs.



Meals-on-Wheels



Homebound seniors age 60+ may be eligible to receive nutritionally balanced meals. For more information, contact your local senior center:

Asheboro	336-625-3389
Archdale	336-431-1938
Liberty	336-622-5844
Randleman	336-498-4332

*We are in need of volunteers to deliver these meals, even just one hour a month is a big help. Contact us for more information.

SITTERS LIST

Randolph Senior Adults maintains a list of sitters willing to sit, assist with personal care, homemaker chores, errands, etc. This is an option for someone needing in-home help and able to pay out-of-pocket. It is up to the individual or family member to check references and conduct interviews.

A copy of the Sitters List can be mailed or e-mailed to you.

Please contact: Margie DiDona or Lisa Alley at 336-625-3389 or rcsaa2@senioradults.org

Coloring Corner



North Carolina Caregiver Portal

Powered by Trualta

Access free training and resources to help you build skills and confidence to provide care at home.

With articles, videos, tip-sheets, and professional level training, there is something for everyone.

nc-caregivers.com

Margie DiDona or Lisa Alley
 Randolph Senior Adults Association
 336-625-3389
 rcsaa2@senioradults.org

Free caregiving resource!



DEMENTIA RESOURCES

Alzheimer's Association
 800-272-3900 (24 hours/7 days)
 alz.org

Dementia Alliance of NC
 919-832-3732
 dementianc.org

Positive Approach to Brain Change
 877-877-1671
 teepasnow.com

Lewy Body Dementia Association
 LBD Caregiver Link: 800-539-9767
 www.lbda.org

Duke Family Support Program Project CARE
 (Dementia and Alzheimer's)
 800-646-2028
 dukefamilysupport.org

A CRISIS GUIDE FOR CAREGIVERS OF SENIORS WITH ALZHEIMER'S OR OTHER DEMENTIA

to understand the changes that can occur. Having dementia puts older adults at risk of several types of crises, including wandering, increased aggression, hallucinations and depression. This guide covers the most common crisis situations and offers tips for preventing them. It also explains what to do if one of these crises occurs and provides some resources to help you navigate the complexities of caring for someone with Alzheimer's disease or dementia.

Wandering in People With Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia

One of the changes that occurs in people with dementia is a reduced ability to recognize familiar surroundings. This can cause them to become confused about where they are and wander away in search of a more familiar environment. According to the Alzheimer's Association, six out of 10 people with Alzheimer's disease wander at some point. People with Alzheimer's disease and dementia may wander for the following reasons:

Increased stress: Some people feel nervous when they're around a lot of people they don't know, causing them to wander to try to get away from the uncomfortable situation.

Previous routines: Dementia interferes with a person's memory. Your loved one may wander because they want to return to familiar routines, such as going to church or having lunch with friends.

Navigation problems: People with dementia may develop problems with their vision or ability to navigate different environments, causing them to get lost even in familiar places.

Looking for loved ones: In some cases, people with dementia wander because they're looking for people they knew in the past, such as friends from school or relatives who've passed away.

Personal needs: People with dementia may also wander when they have personal needs. For example, someone may wander off in search of a restroom.

Steps to Take for Preventing Wandering

There are several steps you can take to prevent wandering. The first is to make sure that all exits have working locks. If your loved one does start to wander, a lock can prevent them from opening a door and putting themselves in harm's way. You should also consider adding alarms to doors and windows to alert you and other caregivers if your loved one is trying to get out of the house.

Mobile Apps: Senior Safety App is one of the most popular options on the market. The free app monitors the user's phone location and makes it easy to request help when needed.

Tracking Devices: Not everyone with dementia has a mobile phone, so some companies offer watches and pendants with GPS tracking capabilities. These products track a loved one's location every few seconds to every few minutes, depending on the product and its settings.

Additional Steps: Even when you take as many precautions as possible, there's a chance your loved one will manage to wander at some point. If this happens, you can protect them by taking the following steps ahead of time:

- Hide the keys to any vehicles on your property, including golf carts, riding lawn mowers and all-terrain vehicles.
- Put away tools and other hazardous items, such as cans of gasoline, bottles of lighter fluid and ladders.
- Buy an ID bracelet and make sure your loved one always wears it. If possible, have the bracelet engraved with a phrase such as "memory impaired" to let first responders know they have dementia.
- Make sure your loved one sees an eye doctor regularly and has their eyeglass prescription updated as needed. If they wander, having the right prescription can reduce their risk of injury by making it easier to see potential obstacles.

What to Do If Your Loved One Wanders Away

If your loved one wanders, start looking for them right away. People with dementia are usually found close to their homes, so check the yard, walk up

and down the street, look around the corner and ask the neighbors if they saw your loved one. Don't forget to check near shrubs and trees, as they may make it difficult to see your loved one from a distance. If you don't find them within 15 minutes, call 911 and report them missing.

Agitation and Aggression in People With Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Wandering isn't the only concern for people with dementia and the people who love them. You may have noticed that your loved one becomes agitated or exhibits increased aggression after an Alzheimer's disease or dementia diagnosis.

Agitation isn't just a symptom — it's a behavioral syndrome that causes restlessness, increased aggression, emotional distress and uncontrolled motor activity. According to an article published in *Frontiers in Neurology*, agitation occurs in approximately 30% to 50% of people with Alzheimer's disease, 40% of people with frontotemporal and vascular dementia, and in 30% of those with Lewy body dementia.

Causes of Agitation and Aggression

People with dementia might develop agitation and aggression for a variety of reasons:

- Increased stress
- Pain caused by arthritis and other medical conditions
- Incontinence
- Altered sleep habits
- Constipation
- Loss of independence
- Confusion
- Isolation/loneliness
- Medication interactions

How to Respond to Agitation and Aggression

If your loved one becomes agitated or displays aggressive behavior, it's important to respond with patience and compassion. The aggression may get worse if you show that your feelings are hurt or try to push them to behave in a different way. Let them know that you value their feelings and will do everything in your power to help them.

- Allow your loved one to keep as much of their independence as is safe.
- Establish a routine for your loved one to follow each day. Knowing what to expect can prevent your loved one from getting confused and becoming agitated.
- Make sure your loved one gets plenty of quiet time each day. If you plan an outing, make sure you don't have activities planned one after the other. A lack of quiet time can lead to aggressive behavior.
- Surround your loved one with photographs and other mementos to remind them of the good times they've had.
- Eliminate clutter from your loved one's home. Too many items can make it difficult to navigate a house or apartment, leading to frustration that can cause agitation.
- Make sure your loved one eats plenty of nutritious food with low levels of sugar and caffeine.

How to Get Help

If you have trouble coping with your loved one's agitation and aggression, contact a trusted family member for support. You should also contact your loved one's doctor to let them know about the increased aggression. Since aggression can indicate that dementia is progressing, the doctor may be able to prescribe medications or recommend other treatment options.

Hallucinations, Delusions and Paranoia in People With Dementia

Even if your loved one isn't agitated or aggressive, they may have hallucinations, delusions or paranoia as a result of their dementia. A hallucination is a false perception of an object or event. You may notice your loved one experience one or more of the following:

Tactile hallucinations: These are hallucinations involving the sense of touch. Your loved one may report that someone is touching them or that they feel something moving around inside their body.

Auditory hallucinations: Auditory hallucinations are associated with a person's sense of hearing. This type of hallucination causes someone with dementia to hear things that aren't really there.

Visual hallucinations: This type of hallucination involves seeing something that isn't there. Your loved one may see flashing lights or tell you that they can see someone standing in the doorway even though there's no one else in the house.

Gustatory hallucinations: Gustatory hallucinations relate to the sense of taste. It's common for people with dementia to report a metallic taste in their mouths.

Olfactory hallucinations: Alzheimer's disease and dementia can also cause people to smell things that aren't there. The phantom smell may be something pleasant, such as the scent of fresh flowers, or something unpleasant, such as the smell of rotting garbage.

Responding to Hallucinations

If your loved one is distraught due to a hallucination, speak in a calm tone of voice. Assure them that you love them and will protect them from harm. In some cases, distracting your loved one can make the hallucination feel less real, making them calmer. You can distract your loved one by changing the subject, suggesting that the two of you move to another room or turning on music that both of you enjoy.

It's important not to argue with someone having a delusion. Instead of telling them, "there's no one there" or "it doesn't smell like flowers in here," say something like "I know you're smelling flowers, but I can't smell them." This acknowledges that their experience is different from yours without you having to lie and say you're experiencing the same thing.

You may also want to try modifying the environment. Some appliances, such as air conditioners and humidifiers, make noises that can trigger auditory hallucinations. Turning these off or moving them to another area can help. If your loved one frequently reports seeing another person in their house, try covering up each mirror with a sheet or blanket.

Delusions in People With Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia

Delusions are similar to hallucinations, with one key difference. While a hallucination is related to the senses, a delusion is a sincere belief in something that isn't real. For example, your loved one may truly believe that someone is poisoning their food even if that's not the case. Memory loss and confusion contribute to these beliefs, making delusions one of the symptoms associated with dementia.

If your loved one experiences delusions, stay calm and don't try to convince them that they're wrong. This can cause agitation and other dementia symptoms to worsen. Instead, acknowledge the belief and let your loved one know that you care about them. Moving to another room or redirecting the conversation to another topic can help your loved one stop focusing on the delusion.

Paranoia in People With Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia

Paranoia involves intense feelings and thoughts that are usually related to conspiracies, threats or persecution. In people with dementia, paranoia is usually related to memory loss. People may feel as if other people are out to get them, especially if they can't remember where they put things or recognize you or another loved one. For example, if your loved one forgets what you just told them, they may think that you are trying to trick them in some way.

If your loved one exhibits paranoia, try not to overreact. Even if your feelings are hurt, it's important to stay calm, acknowledge their feelings and let them know you're committed to protecting them. Explain to other family members that your loved one is paranoid due to dementia, not because of anything a family member said or did. If the paranoia gets worse, contact your loved one's primary care physician or neurologist for guidance.

Unfortunately, people with dementia are often the targets of scams and financial abuse. If you think your loved one is being paranoid, stop and think about whether it's possible someone really is taking advantage of them. You may want to pull copies of their credit reports to make sure no one has signed up for credit accounts in their name. Checking bank account and

credit card balances can also help you determine if someone is stealing from your loved one.

Abusive Behavior in People With Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia

Hallucinations, delusions, paranoia and anxiety can all come together to make someone with dementia prone to abusive behavior. Caregivers have been targeted by abusive behavior from their relatives with dementia. This includes verbal abuse, such as shouting or insulting a caregiver, or physical abuse, such as hitting or kicking.

Like agitation and aggression, abusive behavior can have physical or emotional causes. If someone with dementia has soiled undergarments, pain from another medical condition or stiff joints and muscles due to a lack of physical activity, they may be more likely to lash out. They may also be agitated because you're giving them more complex instructions or asking a lot of questions that they don't understand. Abusive behavior can even occur due to overstimulation. For example, if several people come to visit, your loved one may be triggered by the extra noise.

Responding to Abusive Behavior

If your loved one displays abusive behavior, look for a reason why. They may be upset because they're in pain, they can't find something they need or they think someone is threatening them. In some cases, removing sources of overstimulation and taking your loved one to a more familiar environment can help them calm down.

It can be difficult to stay calm when someone is yelling at you or trying to hurt you, but it's important that you avoid retaliating against your loved one. Speak softly and reassure them that you love them and want to help them. If your loved one continues engaging in abusive behavior, ask other family members for help or call 911 if needed.

Depression and Emotional Changes in People With Dementia

Even if your loved one doesn't get agitated or engage in abusive behavior, they may experience emotional changes as a result of their dementia. In some cases, these changes are due to depression. This is a particular concern in the early and middle stages of the disease. Depression in people with dementia might look different from those who don't have the disease, and it might be hard for them to articulate how they are feeling, so it requires extra vigilance from the caregiver. You may notice that your loved one cries easily, struggles with feelings of guilt or exhibits an unusual level of sadness. Depression may also cause the following symptoms:

- Restlessness
- Irritability
- Trouble staying focused
- Headaches
- Upset stomach
- Unexpected weight changes
- Sleeping too much
- Not getting enough sleep
- Loss of interest in normal activities
- Suicidal thoughts

If your loved one has any of these symptoms, schedule an appointment with a medical professional. Before the appointment, write down all the symptoms you've noticed. This can help doctors make a diagnosis and develop an appropriate treatment plan. If your loved one expresses a desire to harm themselves, call 911 or 800-723-8255 to speak with someone from the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

Resources to Help During Crisis Situations

The Alzheimer's Association helpline offers around-the-clock support for the caregivers of people with dementia and is open 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. Call 800-272-3900 to speak with a care consultant.

caring.com



Continued on next page