

10 Tips for Traveling with Your Loved One Who Has Alzheimer's Disease

If someone you love has Alzheimer's disease, there are many things to consider when planning a trip. A few simple measures will help to ensure that your traveling companion remains safe and comfortable. It is also essential that you contact your doctor and develop a realistic travel plan. That way, you can both enjoy your vacation to its fullest.



- 1. Bring along an identification tag** that your companion can wear around his or her neck. In addition, register him or her with the safe return program in your area. Information about the safe return program in your area can be found at your local [Alzheimer's Association chapter](#).
- 2. Keep things as familiar as possible.** For example, keep bedtimes and eating times as close to normal as possible, and bring the person's favorite pajamas or pillow. If the person has never traveled on an airplane before, this is not the best time to introduce something new.

3. Be prepared. Get plenty of rest before the trip. Pack for the patient, allowing extra time for everything. Bathe and dress him or her without rushing, and make sure you both wear comfortable clothing during the trip. Research in advance what medical services are offered at your destination, in case you need them. Bring a brief medical history with you, including a current medication list, doctor's telephone numbers and a list of any allergies.

4. Plan your itinerary well in advance. If staying with friends or family, make them aware of what Alzheimer's is and what the symptoms can look like. Minimize time spent with large groups, noisy places or energetic children. Avoid busy, chaotic locations. Check in with family members daily during the trip.

5. Be realistic. Carefully assess what the person's limitations and strengths are and shape the vacation accordingly. Also be realistic about your own and other caregivers' limitations and strengths--can you handle the person if he or she becomes agitated or wanders or is unable to sleep? Get your doctor's feedback on what is realistic and whether he or she recommends prescribing medication for the trip.

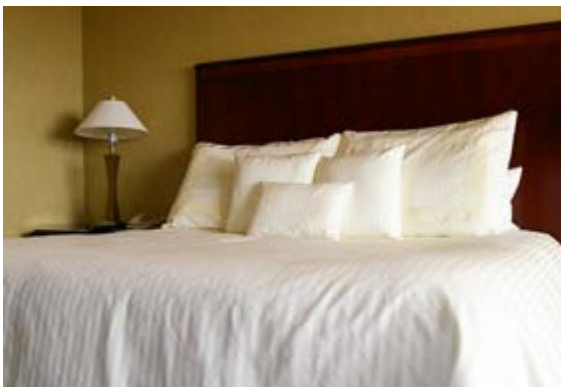
6. Limit the length of plane or car rides. If a trip is over four hours, two caregivers should be present. Bring along toys, photos, hobbies or other distractions in case the person with Alzheimer's becomes agitated. Carry hand-wipes for any spills. Avoid caffeine.



7. If you are driving and the person with Alzheimer's becomes agitated, pull over. Do not try to calm him or her and drive at the same time. He or she may become more disoriented and try to leave a moving car.



8. If you are traveling by air, avoid layovers, and try to fly on direct flights only. Carry all boarding passes, passports, and other important papers yourself, rather than giving them to the person with Alzheimer's. Request a middle seat for your companion and an aisle seat for yourself so that he or she cannot wander away without your noticing. Pre-board the aircraft. Pack all medications in a carry-on bag--do not put it in checked luggage, which can get lost.



9. If you are staying in a hotel, request a large and quiet room. To protect against wandering order a door alarm or a childproof doorknob cover. Avoid rooms with sliding glass doors.



10. Have a back-up plan. That way you can react to mishaps without become overly anxious yourself. Recognize when the patient is becoming upset or agitated, and stop any activities when necessary in order to get some rest.

Source: <http://www.alzinfo.org/alzheimers-travel.asp>