



# The MASE Monthly Newsletter

## July 2015



### Recipients of Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

### Has Summer finally arrived?

#### Alzheimer's

Do not ask me to remember  
 Do not try to make me understand  
 Let me rest and know you are with me  
 Kiss my cheek and hold my hand  
 I am confused beyond your concept  
 I am sad and sick and lost  
 All I know is that I need you  
 to be with me at all cost  
 Do not lose your patience with me  
 Do not scold or curse my cry  
 I can't help the way I am acting  
 I can't be different, though I try  
 Just remember that I need you  
 That the best of me is gone  
 Please don't fail to stand beside me  
 Love me till my life is done.

*There are many verses about the illness that you are all are dealing with so admirably. The words in this verse are very poignant and we feel sure many of you will relate to it.*



Well at last the glorious sunshine has reached us and we can look forward to some lovely warm days ahead.

However please do take care of yourselves in the heat and remember to put on sun cream if you are likely to be in the sun.

- Remember to drink plenty of water to keep yourselves hydrated. Many people forget to drink in the heat and it can lead to so many problems.
- Have a cool shower. Always keep a cold flannel in a plastic bag in fridge, so that you can use it to cool you down.
- Try to eat regularly as even a salad will replace the salt loss caused through perspiration
- Wear loose, lightweight, light coloured, cotton clothing.



**For those of you going on holiday - please try to enjoy your break. If possible try also to find some time to relax during your time away.**

### Tips to help you stay safe and steady on your feet

So many Carers neglect themselves whilst caring for a loved one. Here are some simple things to help you stay steady on your feet and some top tips to help you improve your strength and balance and to feel more confident, particularly if you are worried about falling.

1. Try to do some exercise regularly; focus particularly on activities that challenge your balance and strengthen your legs.
2. Check your eyes and hearing. Regular sight tests and reporting ear pain or difficulties with hearing can identify problems that could affect your balance and co-ordination. Eye tests are free for everyone over 60.
3. Ask about your medicines. Certain medicines can make you feel faint or affect your balance. Let your GP or pharmacist know if you ever feel like this, as they may wish to review your medication.
4. Visit your GP. If you have had a fall or are worried about falling, tell your GP. There may be many reasons and equally, many ways to help you feel confident again.
5. Count your calcium. A balanced diet rich in calcium will also help to keep your bones strong. Calcium can be found in milk and dairy foods such as cheese and yoghurt, fortified soya products and canned fish.
6. Check for home hazards. Make sure your home is hazard-free and well lit. Organise your things so that you are not at risk of tripping over any wire, clutter or loose or frayed carpets.
7. Look after your feet. Problems with your feet, especially thing that causes pain, can affect your balance. Be sure to wear well-fitted shoes and slippers and report any foot problems to your GP or chiropodist.
8. Vitamin D is essential for keeping bones strong - the best source is sunshine, however remember to take care and not to let your skin redden or burn. Some foods such as oily fish or eggs also provide Vitamin D.

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**Alzheimer's Society Dementia Helpline 0300 222 1122 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and Saturday and Sunday 10am - 4pm.**

## Helpful tips on Eating



**Food.** It's something we all enjoy. But imagine that you can no longer recognize when you're feeling hungry or thirsty. What would it be like if you had just eaten a full meal, and then within a few minutes you were looking for food again because you forgot you just ate? Beyond appetite, how would you feel if you lost the ability to control your fork or no longer knew the purpose of a dining utensil?

While a person wouldn't experience all of these things during the early stages of memory loss, dementia is a progressive disease, making it likely for these symptoms to occur at some point. That's why, as a caregiver of someone who has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's or a related form of dementia, it's so important to take the time to understand what they are experiencing and respond with empathy. Here are some tips to help make a successful and enjoyable mealtime experience for your loved one with memory loss:

### Accommodate Personal Preferences

Those with memory loss find comfort and security in the familiar, so get to know personal favorites and serve their preferred foods. The Alzheimer's Association recommends offering foods that were enjoyed in the past, while keeping in mind that a person with dementia may suddenly develop new food preferences or reject foods they were previously fond of. The scent of coffee brewing or bread baking can be a wonderful, familiar cue which may help to stimulate appetite and meal participation.

Try to maintain familiar routines, such as making sure they are seated at their favorite place at the table, offering a newspaper as the meal is being prepared, or softly playing some favorite music in the background. If she was accustomed to having a table setting that included several pieces of flatware and does not appear to be stressed by this, continue the practice. On the other hand, be prepared to spot if too many glasses and utensils are causing confusion, which could lead to feelings of being overwhelmed or frustrated.

The same thing applies when it comes to placing too much food on the plate. You might need to start with a couple items and add more throughout the meal. To promote as much independence as possible, use adult appropriate plates with high lips or edges that make it easier to get food onto a spoon or fork.

### Preserve Dignity

Don't make the mistake of thinking a person with dementia no longer appreciates a fine dining experience. If your loved one always used a linen tablecloth or enjoyed having some fresh flowers on the table, continue to make their mealtime more aesthetically pleasing by upholding the practice.



Carnations are a nice option because they are decorative and happen to be edible (safety first!). Additionally, remember it's also your approach that helps to set the stage for a successful and enjoyable meal. Take the time to greet and make good eye contact at their eye level. If assistance is needed during the meal, sit down with them rather than stand as you help. Spend time having the meal together, as this more social environment encourages people to eat.



To preserve dignity and avoid drawing attention to the fact that he or she needs additional assistance, cut food into bite sized pieces before bringing it to the table. If food tends to spill on clothing, it's much more dignified to place a large napkin over the front of someone's shirt and an additional one on their lap versus rely on a bib. Adults with memory loss should always be treated with dignity and respect.

If you have a computer please take a look at our website which covers all MASE activities: [www.themasegroup.com](http://www.themasegroup.com)

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