



# MASE Monthly Newsletter



Proud Recipients of Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

## August 2022



It is hard to believe we are now in the month of August. Although many of us have found the last sunny spells quite uncomfortable, we must remember that sunshine also boosts our serotonin levels, which they say makes us happier. Also in the heat we must take things easy and not rush around as much. Please make sure you are drinking lots of water and keeping yourselves hydrated, but most important of all - always remember to **S M I L E.....**

*Smiling is infectious you catch it like the flu, when someone smiled at me today, I started smiling too. I passed around the corner, and someone saw me grin, and when he smiled, I realised I had passed it onto him!*

*I thought about the smile and realised it's worth, a single smile like mine could travel around the earth.*

*So if you feel a smile begin, don't leave it undetected, lets start an epidemic quick and get the world infected!*



## Dementia and Holidays

### How to prepare for a holiday?

Planning is the most important tip. Although plans can and do go wrong, having a clear idea of how your journey will unfold can take away much of the anxiety about the trip ahead. This can include travelling at less busy times such as off peak season. You can also pre-book tickets to popular excursions or places of interest to avoid long queues which can prove unsettling for people with dementia.

Most airports and train providers will also provide assistance. It can help if you contact them in advance to let them know of your needs so they can provide appropriate help, such as getting on and off transport. Eurostar offer assistance for free and UK rail companies offer assisted passenger reservation services. Many airports also provide quiet areas and lanyards for those living with dementia to let airport staff know that extra support may be needed.

It's important to take any medication that a person with dementia may need as well as anything which may bring them comfort or a sense of familiarity, such as headphones, with music or audio books, to drown out excessive noise, a set of photos or a favourite blanket.

### Travelling by car, by ferry, by train or plane?

If unsure that the person would be able to tolerate a long flight a short haul break may be best, or a holiday in the UK. If travelling by ferry, priority boarding and a quieter club lounge can be requested, but there could be a small charge for this service. If you travel by car make sure to factor in plenty of rest stops and breaks. It can also be worthwhile considering back-up or alternative plans in case of delays or cancellations.

### Where should I stay?

If going on a package holiday, you can ask when making requests that this information will be passed on to the holiday representative. They will then inform the hotel and discreetly support you, if you need it.

Some holiday hotels can be large, so a smaller hotel with good signage would be more suitable for a person with dementia. The person may also prefer to be on the ground floor, closer to the amenities and assistance if it is needed. You can consider taking a portable door sensor or alarm to alert you if the person leaves the hotel room, if you are staying in separate rooms.

### Worried about going on holiday?

Families are often best placed to know whether a holiday is a good idea. If you are unsure, you can speak to your GP who can provide you with guidance. Some possible warning signs include: confusion and disorientation in familiar settings; difficulties with continence, or anxiety and disconnection in crowded places.

### Any other things to consider

If you're holidaying outside of the UK, make sure you have medical insurance and take all of the documentation with you in case of a medical emergency. If you're holidaying in Europe a [GHIC card](#) – a free Global Health Insurance Card. Prior to going on holiday, spend time researching where the local doctors' surgeries and hospitals that are located in the area.

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

# Dementia and Sleep

Dementia affects everyone with a diagnosis of dementia differently. But sleep disturbance and issues around bedtime can be very common. If you are caring for someone with dementia who is unsettled during the night, it can mean that neither of you are getting enough sleep.

Dementia can cause confusion and anxiety, which some people find seems to get worse during the evening, and before bedtime. Providing reassurance for the person can be the most powerful way to help them feel calmer and more ready to go to bed. Just sitting down with the person can be the most powerful way to help them feel calmer and ready to go to bed. Simply sit with them and tell them that everything is OK and that you will be there with them through the night.

## Good Habits: Going Outside

A good place to start is by considering what the person is doing throughout the day as this will have an effect on how tired or restless they are at night. Some of the things that can make a person less likely to be tired at bedtime are:

- \* Too much sitting and being physically and mentally inactive
- \* A lack of fresh air and sunlight
- \* Inactivity during the day
- \* Many people with dementia spend a lot of time indoors, missing out on the stimulation and exercise that can help make them ready for bed at night time.

## Consider things you can do to help by going outside, such as:

- \* A walk around the block
- \* A trip to a park or a garden centre
- \* **Simply** sitting in the garden in the fresh air, if they have mobility issues.

Of course, your own mobility, and the mobility of the person with dementia, will affect how possible these options are.

## Establishing good habits: food and drink

The food and drink a person with dementia consumes can have an impact on their sleep pattern. Try to watch what they eat and drink throughout the day to see what makes a difference you could try:

- \* Eating heavier meals at lunchtime rather than during the evening
- \* Avoiding sugary food later in the day
- \* Reducing caffeine and alcohol
- \* If they like to have a cup of tea, or coffee, consider swapping to decaffeinated types. A herbal tea, such as chamomile, or a warm milky drink can be calming before bedtime. If the person has always enjoyed a glass of wine, or beer, in the evening, look for low alcohol varieties.

## Setting the scene for bed:

It is so important to take into account the preferences of the person with dementia. We are all different and have varied body clocks and preferences:

- \* Check the temperature of the bedroom, to make sure it's not too hot
- \* Make sure their bedclothes are suitable for the season. Being too hot, or cold, in the night can cause a person to wake up
- \* Find out if they prefer to sleep in darkness or would they like a night light on.

## Wandering

- \* If your loved one tends to get up in the night, to use the toilet or to wander around, you might want to have a light on for them, either in the room, or perhaps in the corridor. Keeping the bathroom light on and the door open can help them to find their way to the toilet. Always remember to keep the pathway to the bathroom CLEAR.
- \* In the summertime, when the evenings are lighter, it can help maintain a routine by pulling the curtains, or blinds, at the same time each evening.
- \* Think back to the persons preferences for bedtime before they received their diagnosis of dementia. If they liked to go to bed late at night, that preference will probably stay the same, and so it will be difficult to get them ready for bed earlier in the evening.
- \* Medication can aid sleep. But sleeping medication MUST only be used with caution and under the guidance of your GP.

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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