



The MASE Monthly Newsletter

May 2016



Winners of Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

Five Interesting Facts about the month of May



Happy May Day

1. The month May was named for Maia, the Greek goddess of fertility.
2. In any given year, no month ever begins or ends on the same day of the week as May does.
3. May's birthstone is the emerald which is emblematic of love and success.
4. May was once considered a bad luck month to get married. There is a poem that says "Marry in May and you'll rue the day".
5. The United Kingdom celebrates May as the National Smile Month.

15 - 21 May Dementia Awareness Week

Just in case you are not aware, it will soon be **Dementia Awareness Week 2016**. This year's Dementia Awareness Week, 15 – 21 May, will encourage people who are worried about dementia to confront their worries by addressing dementia directly and coming to the Alzheimer's Society for information and support.



Do Alzheimer's patients Fear Water?

The simple facts are this: many Alzheimer's patients don't like water because they no longer perceive water in the way that you and I do. Water is nearly invisible and often disconcerting to the typical Alzheimer's patient. They don't like to drink it, and they don't like to take a shower or bath in it.

We often discuss how difficult it is to get an Alzheimer's patients or a patient with a related dementia to take a bath. We have discussed the use of the smile, nonverbal communication, and a number of techniques and timings that might help the Carer accomplish this mission - bathing .

Do Alzheimer's patients fear water? Is water nearly invisible to Alzheimer's patients?
Does water disorient Alzheimer's patient and make them feel anxious or confused?

Did you ever notice that when an Alzheimer's patient gets in the shower they immediately move to the side so the water doesn't come down on them? In other words, it doesn't hit them in the head.

When you go into the shower with the water on, do you willing step under the water (assuming you have it at the desired temperature), and put your head under the water? Answer? Or, do you step to the side and ease your way in?

Have you ever considered that an Alzheimer's patients can't see water, or at least they don't perceive water the way we do? Is it possible that water is invisible, in a sense, to Alzheimer's patients? If something you couldn't see, or perceive, started hitting you in the head would you get confused, disconcerted, or angry? If something that you couldn't see or perceive started hitting you in head, would you run from it?

There is an alternative to having the water hit the person in the head when they enter the shower. You can use the hand held attachment, detach it from the wall, let it hang down, and aim in at the floor, or away from the patient. If you do this, you will then most likely have to assist the patient in taking the shower. Assisting the patient to take a shower is probably something you will have to do sooner or later anyway.

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

Getting someone with Alzheimer's to eat

As Alzheimer's or dementia progresses getting a loved one to eat a nutritious meal, or to eat enough, can become a problem. This can cause the Carer to become frustrated, confused, and even angry. It can also bring on feelings of sadness and hopelessness.

1. The First Question is - What Colour are Your Plates?

In a recent study researchers found that patients eating from red plates consumed 25 percent more food than those eating from white plates. Ask yourself this simple question? Are you 100 % sure an Alzheimer's patient can see the food on the plate?

2. Always try to make eye contact while your cared for is eating.

Sit directly in front of your loved one and make eye contact while they are eating. Smile and wait for them to smile back at you. Be patient, very, very patient, keep making eye contact, and if necessary you eat something of their plate and then wait for them to follow your lead.

3. Do not say a word?

Trying to convince a person living with Alzheimer's, if they are at the point of not eating, that they must eat is counterproductive to your effort. Trying to explain why they need to eat is counter productive. A good guide is to make regular eye contact and smile.

Here are some additional eating tips for a loved one with dementia

1. Utensils. At some point your patient might have problems using forks, knives, spoons, etc. If so, consider trying finger food. Chicken strips, fish fingers, or hamburgers.
2. Always try to make eye contact while eating. If possible sit directly in front of your loved one and make eye contact with them and smile before you start giving them food.
3. Arrange the food on the plate. If your cared for is having trouble eating, less food (portion size), and less items. One or two food choices. In addition, if there is one food your patient really likes, put that on the plate and another food right next to it.
4. Create a Positive Atmosphere before you eat. Don't just plop the food down in front of your loved one. Create a positive atmosphere. For example, start humming/singing a favourite song. Singing always puts people in a good mood.
5. Stay quiet. Once someone starts eating, always remain quiet. This is so the person doesn't get distracted from the food. Alzheimer's patients are easily distracted, and can get confused if you try and get them to - multi-task. REMEMBER - one task at a time.
6. Eat small all day long. If you can get your loved one to eat a small amount, several times during the day, that might help.
7. Ask yourself some questions. What did your Alzheimer's patient like to eat best in the past? Not what you like or think is best, **what did they like?** Eating is definitely a problem. About 40 % of Alzheimer's patients start losing an unhealthy amount of weight at some point. This is a common problem so remember you are not alone. Try not to get frustrated. Instead, think positive, smile when it is time for them to eat, and sing or play music.

Try to be flexible and patient. Patience means giving your cared for plenty of time to eat without chastising them or blaming them for not eating. How would you like to be treated if you were having problems eating through no fault of your own?

If you have a computer please take a look at our website which covers all MASE activities: www.themasegroup.com

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