

## CAREGIVER TIPS FOR TRAVELING [www.caregiver.com](http://www.caregiver.com)

Traveling long distances with a person in the early stage of dementia may still be quite enjoyable. As dementia advances, however, traveling becomes unpredictable as the person becomes more confusing.

Plan ahead for a trip by gathering important documents: insurance cards, passports, your physician's phone number, refills on medications and a copy of medical records in case the person with dementia needs to see a physician while away. Make sure you keep track of all the documents and medications. Packing them in carry-on bags so they will not get lost en route is a good idea. Remember to bring sufficient funds or a credit card with you in case you must change your plans suddenly and return home. Also, you may want to bring along a brief letter from your physician to the airline or hotel to expedite a change in plans.

When traveling, try to follow the routine that is followed at home. Even minor changes in routine can be distressing to your loved one, and may cause unexpected delays in the delivery of care. So, be sure to allow plenty of time for everything. Plan for rest periods throughout the day. For example, if you are taking a tour by bus, you may want to remain in the bus so the person can take a nap instead of visiting all the sights. Remember the person who is at risk of wandering when at home, may also do so in an unfamiliar place. If this is the case with your loved one, try using an identity bracelet or necklace that clearly explains that she has a dementia illness. Put a card with the name and address of the hotel where you are staying in the person's pocket. You may want to carry a recent photo of the person in case she gets lost. Traveling may also make the person more anxious. Bring along an anti-anxiety medicine just in case.

Toileting is an issue that requires some forethought when you are traveling. If you are driving, stop at the rest-area toilets every couple of hours. If the person needs assistance in the bathroom and you may be in there for a while, bring along an "OCCUPIED" sign for the washroom door. Have on hand a full change of clothing. Be sure to keep the way to the toilet well lighted in hotel rooms, and keep a light turned at night in the bathroom.

A few more travel tips to keep in mind: If you are traveling by car, never leave your loved one with dementia alone in the car. Try to bring along a relative or friend to share in the driving. And if you are traveling by plane, you may want to notify the airline ahead of time, so you can ask for any assistance.

Manual of Caregivers by Rush Alzheimer's Disease Center Information for this article was obtained from the Rush Alzheimer's Disease Center, for more information you can visit their site at: <http://www.rush.edu/>

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