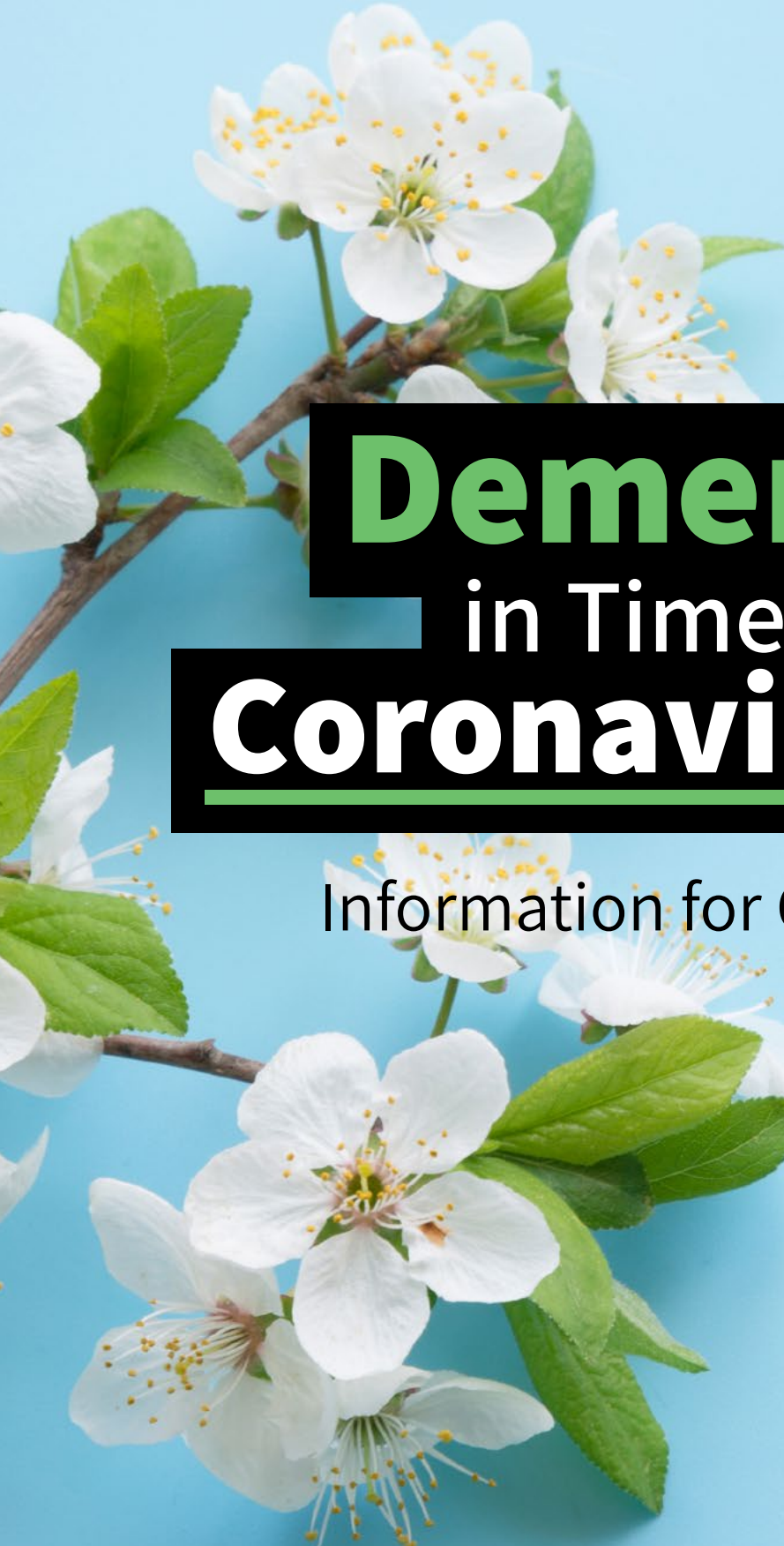




State of Israel
Ministry of Health
משרד הבריאות



JDC Israel Eshel
Touching Lives, Transforming Communities



Dementia in Times of **Coronavirus** (Covid-19)

Information for Caregivers

■ Authors

(Names of the authors are organized according to the subjects in the booklet)

Neta Cohen, Dementia Program Manager, Joint-Eshel

Dr. Iris Rasooli, MD MPH, Director of the Department of Community Geriatric Services, Geriatric Division, Israel Ministry of Health, Director of the National Program for Addressing Alzheimer's Disease and Other Types of Dementia

Dr. Maayan Katz, Deputy National Service director for Occupational Therapy, Ministry of Health

Dr. Dana Peer, Gerontologist and Occupational Therapist, Emda

Ayala Parag, Chief Physical Therapist, The National Department of Physical Therapy, Ministry of Health

Yael Rotem-Galili, Coordinator of Geriatric Physical Therapy, The National Department of Physical Therapy, Ministry of Health

Dr. Gila Shahar, Deputy to the Chief Physical Therapist, The National Department of Physical Therapy, Ministry of Health

Orly Bergerzon Bitton, Deputy Chief of Communication Disorders Department and Geriatric SLP Coordinator, Ministry of Health

Yael Ben Muvhar, Occupational Therapist, Geriatric Inspection Team Tel Aviv Region, Ministry of Health. Authorized Validation Teacher

Josefa Kachal, MD, Head of the Nutrition Department for the Elderly, Nutrition Division, Ministry of Health

Dr. Daphna Shefet, Director of Geriatric Psychiatry Clinic, Coordinator of Ambulatory Services, Shalvata Mental Health Center

■ Editing, design and production

Neta Cohen, Joint-Eshel

Dr. Iris Rasooli, Ministry of Health

Translation: Dr. Dana peer, Emda; Ayala Parag, Ministry of Health

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<https://www.eshelnet.org.il> <https://www.health.gov.il>

Dear citizens and caregivers,

At this time, when so much of our attention is directed towards the Corona epidemic, we should remain aware of special populations among us, in particular, persons with dementia. For these people, as well for their family members and caregivers, coping with the changes, social restrictions and isolation is a special challenge. Maintaining health and quality of life in this situation is exceptionally important.

In this booklet we have compiled professional information that may help you maintain an active and healthy routine for the person you care for, focusing on the unique issues raised by dementia, within the constraints of the times.

Here you will find information about the corona virus, maintaining daily activities and routine, physical exercise, communicating with persons with dementia, guidance on food and eating, as well as advice on emotional wellbeing for persons with dementia, their family members and their caregivers.

I thank the authors of the booklet.

With great appreciation for all your efforts
and wishes for more healthful and peaceful times,

Dr. Vered Ezra

Head of the Medical Division
Israel Ministry of Health

For information on matters under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health, you may contact the Ministry of Health Hotline, "The Health Voice" ('Kol Habriut') at *5400 or 08-6241010 or on the web:

https://www.health.gov.il/English/Public_Enquiries/Pages/CallCenter.aspx



Dear Friends and Caregivers,

The corona crisis has forced us – and especially the older adult population and those who provide care for them – to learn to cope with changes in our daily routines.

The crisis is even more challenging for people living with dementia. With fewer physical, leisure and occupational engagements and activities, they are likely to experience further cognitive and physical decline. Moreover, people living with dementia find it difficult to learn or adapt to alternative solutions – especially those that are digitally based. They will struggle adopting new safety guidelines – such as frequent hand washing, wearing protective masks and social distancing - and implementing these into their daily routine. Hence, supervision and regular reminders are vital for this population.

This guide is intended for caregivers of people living with dementia. It provides knowledge and tools to minimize health risk, as well as enrichment activities to improve quality of life, and to ease the burden on caregivers. The guide includes information about coronavirus and how to cope with it, as well as suggestions for developing a new daily routine in line with recommended guidelines. Importantly, it also recommends tools for the primary caregivers in order that they should maintain their health and wellbeing.

We thank the staff of the Ministry of Health's Geriatric Department for their collaboration in preparing this guide and hope that you find it useful during these challenging times.

Yossi Heymann

CEO, JDC-ESHEL

For additional material and tools for coping during Corona, please see the designated page on Eshel's website:
https://www.eshelnet.org.il/en/COVID19_Materials

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The Coronavirus – General Information

The Coronavirus causes a disease that manifests in fever, coughing and sometimes shortness of breath, requiring hospitalization. The severity of the disease varies from person to person. The elderly are at greater risk.

To date, no medicine or vaccine are available for treating this disease, and therefore it is **critical to prevent contagion**. A person may contract the disease from another person who may not seem ill. The virus **spreads mostly by droplets in the air**, when you get close to another person, but **also when you touch a contaminated person or object** such as shaking hands, touching a doorknob or pressing buttons in an elevator.

To prevent contracting the disease:

- Stay at home and avoid going out when not necessary.
- Keep a distance of at least 2 meters from other people, even if they are family and friends. You may remain close to the people that live with you.
- If you meet with other people, you must wear a mask and make sure others do so as well – so that the virus does not reach you via the air.
- At home wash your hands often with soap and water, so that the virus does not spread through touching objects or other people. If you must go out (for medical attention, for example) sterilize your hands with alcohol.
- When the situation permits, you may leave the house for exercise, which is important for health.
- Always observe 3 rules to prevent contamination:
 - ✓ Stay at least 2 meters away from others
 - ✓ Wear a mask
 - ✓ Sterilize your hands with alcohol and wash them when you return home.

How to prepare for staying at home?

Handwashing

Hand Hygiene is one of the most effective actions you can take to reduce the spread of pathogens and prevent infections, including the COVID-19 virus.

- Make sure you have soap by the sink (bathrooms, kitchen).
- Wash your hands several times a day, especially before you eat or touch your face or after using the toilet.
- Make sure to wash for at least 20 seconds at a time.
- If needed, put a note by the sink to remind you to wash your hands.

Proper Hand Washing

Recommended time: 40-60 seconds



For a video on handwashing: <https://youtu.be/ZUqUqXt-RoM>

Wearing a mask

- Wearing a mask is very important when people come into your house or when you go out; both you and your visitor must wear a mask.
- The mask should cover your mouth and your nose and be close to your face.
- There are many kinds of masks. If using a surgical mask, make sure the colored side is facing away from your face.

Guidelines on Wearing a Protective Mask In Public and at Work
Together We Will Beat Coronavirus

1. Coronavirus is transmitted in droplets
2. A protective mask lowers the risk of infecting and of being infected
3. In public and at work people must wear protective masks, at home there is no need
4. The type of recommended mask for the public: a regular mask or a home-made mask
5. For a home mask, use densely woven cotton fabric that is not stretchy, (such as fabric of a percale or satin bed-sheet, folded into 3 layers)
6. It is important that the mask fit the nose and mouth tightly

Remember:

- ☑ Worn out masks, do not protect
- ☑ Check that the mask does not cause difficulty breathing. Patients with heart or lung disease should exercise caution
- ☑ Wash hands after touching the mask to prevent transmission of the virus

MINISTRY OF HEALTH
For a healthier life

Supplies

- Make sure you have enough food, medications, handwashing soap and other important items for the next few weeks.
- If you need to purchase things – do not go out to buy them yourself.
- Instead, have a family member, friend or neighbor purchase them for you and bring them to your house. They can leave the items outside your door, so that you can take them in without contact.



For a list of healthy food in times of coronavirus (in Hebrew):

<https://www.efsharibari.gov.il/eat-healthy/healthy-nutrition/mediterranean-diet/eating-healthy-during-quarantine>

Keeping in touch

- Prepare a list of contacts for emergencies as well as regular times; you can get help from someone else in preparing this.
- Include information about:
 - ✓ Family members
 - ✓ Friends
 - ✓ Neighbors you know
 - ✓ Family doctor
 - ✓ Pharmacy
 - ✓ Emergency numbers (police, fire dept., municipality and Magen David Adom)
- Make sure to stay in touch regularly with family members, friends and neighbors. Every day you should call someone from the list.
- Find out if there are organizations that can help with what you need during these days - for example an online support group or volunteers.

List of organizations and services (in Hebrew): <http://jointeshel.inwise.net/CoronaService>

Activities

- Plan activities that include home maintenance tasks and hobbies that you can do at home.
- Put up notes to remind you to do various activities. Think how you might do different activities each day.
- Make sure to stay active and move about inside the home as much as possible. If you can, exercise regularly inside. If you have a yard and you can go out, exercise there.

For more material and activity ideas (in Hebrew):

https://www.eshelnet.org.il/sites/default/files/CoronaHomeActivitiesHebrew_0.pdf



**For further explanation about the Coronavirus disease
and the Ministry of Health directives:**

<https://www.health.gov.il/English/Topics/Diseases/corona/Pages/default.aspx>

Dementia and the Coronavirus – Information for families and caregivers

The Coronavirus affects all of us, increasing our concern about our own health, as well as the health of our loved ones. This may be accentuated when we are responsible for taking care of another person who is in the high risk group for this disease.

The Ministry of Health releases guidelines to the public on the changing routine in the coronavirus outbreak. These are updated on the website:

<https://www.health.gov.il/English/Topics/Diseases/corona/Pages/default.aspx>

■ Persons with Dementia may be at higher risk to contract the Coronavirus because:

- They do not remember the specific hygiene guidelines (frequent hand washing, social distancing and refraining from face touching)
- They may have difficulty in reporting disease symptoms or that they feel unwell and others may fail to notice that.
- They often have other chronic diseases which puts them at higher risk for severe coronavirus infection.

■ How to assist a person with dementia during this period:

A person with dementia can sense the increased worry and anxiety around them, but may have difficulty understanding the information from the media. Also, the flood of information may be overwhelming. Therefore:

- Explain the situation in plain terms (try using the information in the chapter above).
- Focus the conversation on emotional and calming messages. Tell them that you miss them, that you are thinking of them and watching over them from afar.

- Encourage them to avoid going out when not necessary, yet go for physical exercise in the open air, wearing a mask, keeping distance from other people and maintaining hand hygiene.
- If you live apart from the person with dementia, try to stay in touch through phone calls or video chats, so that they can see you.
- Make sure they have enough supplies: food, medications, toileting materials, etc.
- Caution them about potential phone and internet fraud – various people may attempt to exploit this uncertain period and target vulnerable populations.

■ Tips for caregiving at home for a person with dementia

Explaining the situation

Try to use easily understood language and terms (see above).

Hygiene upkeep

- It may be complicated to explain why you both need to wash your hands frequently or why you are avoiding touching the person with dementia.
- If relevant to the person's cognitive ability, put up written reminders throughout the house about handwashing and hygiene:
 - ✓ Place signs in the bathroom and other places reminding to wash hands for 20 seconds.
 - ✓ Demonstrate by washing your hands.
 - ✓ If the person with dementia cannot reach the sink or easily wash hands, an alternative is sterilizing their hands with alcogel with a minimum of 60% alcohol.
- Sterilize objects and surfaces that are frequently used in the house, such as door handles, the kitchen table, TV remote control, telephone, etc.



Social distancing

Consider if it is possible for you to sleep in a separate room and/or stay 2 meters away from each other. **If that is not possible:**

- Do not worry or blame yourself.
- Remember that you are doing the best you can during this difficult time.
- Just feeling safe and having you around is important.

Using a facial mask

- Remember that using a mask may cause alarm, discomfort and disorientation for some persons with dementia, due to difficulty with facial recognition when it is partially covered by the mask, especially if they do not understand the need for it.
- Use the mask when it is necessary and try to explain why.



Supplies

- Make sure to stock up on whatever you may need for the near future; try to fill several months of ongoing prescriptions.
- Make an online order for staple supplies (food and medications) or ask family/ friends to purchase for you and leave them outside your door.

Daily routine and activities

If the person with dementia went to a day center before it was closed, he may be experiencing a lack of stimulation and activities:

- Try to suggest activities that may be done at home, including physical activities.
- Try to include a variety of activities.
- Try to set up a daily schedule to maintain stability at these times.

For more activity suggestions, please see the next chapter "Day planning during a time of social distancing" and go to: <https://www.eshelnet.org.il/Corona> (In Hebrew).

Media and the news cycle

- Try not to have the television and/or the radio constantly on in the background. The ongoing news coverage may cause fear and disquiet, even if the person with dementia does not fully understand what is being discussed.
- Remember, though the person with dementia may not understand what is said, he is able to pick up on the emotional message (tone of voice, facial expressions) and is attuned to what the news makes you, the caregiver, feel.



Day planning during a time of social distancing

Sources of support for the caregiver

- Be informed about online resources that can assist you during this time. For a list go to: <http://jointeshel.inwise.net/CoronaService> (In Hebrew).
- Make sure to take time for yourself to refresh.

In case of illness

For a person with dementia, increased confusion may be an initial symptom of illness. If the person seems increasingly confused and you are concerned for their health due to other chronic illnesses, consult a doctor by phone before going to a clinic. **If the person has difficulty breathing, a cough and/or a fever, immediately contact the HMO (Kupat Holim) or Magen David Adom.**

Further information

Short videos for caregivers of elderly persons in times of coronavirus (in Hebrew with English subtitles):

<https://www.eshelnet.org.il/InGoodHandsEnglish>

Information page – recommendations for caregivers of the elderly at home (in Hebrew):

<https://www.eshelnet.org.il/sites/default/files/EshelHandwashingHebrew.pdf>

Q&A about dementia and Coronavirus (in Hebrew):

<https://www.gvurot.co.il/post/coronaqanda>

Ministry of Health page about Coronavirus:

<https://www.health.gov.il/English/Topics/Diseases/corona/Pages/default.aspx>

Phone numbers for further assistance

Alzheimer's Center in Ramat Gan (24/7): 03-5599333

EMDA - Alzheimer's Association of Israel: *8889

Ezer Mizion Tziporah Fried Alzheimer Support Center: 073-3956807

Melabev – Alzheimer and Dementia care: 02-6537591

Social distancing and staying at home are now required as protective measures against contacting the Coronavirus. These disrupt previous life patterns. A daily schedule can be supportive during routine times, and even more so in times of stress.

For the person with dementia and their caregivers, a regular schedule will help decrease uncertainty and anxiety.

How to create a daily schedule for staying at home:

- Try to maintain morning routines – getting up and organized, hygiene activities, getting dressed, grooming and starting the day as usual.
- Maintain nutritional routines, as well as eating at ascribed times. If the person with dementia ate breakfast and lunch at a day center, try to eat these meals at the same time at home.
- Prepare a written schedule and incorporate various activities adapted to the abilities of the person with dementia (see below). The activities should include movement and exercise, creativity and arts, cognitive exercises, cooking and baking, gardening and taking care of plants, watching TV (not too much!), interacting with friends and family, rest periods and sleep.



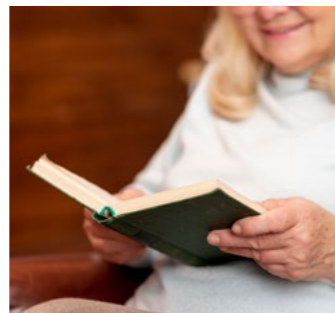
Example of exercise: Try to create a walking path in the house where the person with dementia can safely walk back and forth. You might use colored tape to mark the path on the floor (do not use masking tape which leaves marks on the floor). This path may be used for exercise and movement games (see links below).



Home maintenance: We recommend having the person with dementia participate in such activities according to their abilities: dusting, folding laundry, washing vegetables, helping prepare food, cutting up foodstuff, drying silverware and putting in drawer, matching socks, etc. All these should be done in a relaxed and non-judgmental atmosphere.

Schedule example

Hour	Activity
7:00	Rise and shine
7:00-8:00	Morning organization: bathroom, shower, getting dressed, grooming, etc.
8:00-8:30	Prepare breakfast together
8:30-9:00	Eat breakfast
9:00-9:30	Rest
9:30-10:00	Exercise and movement
10:00-11:00	Games / watching TV (nature channels or classical music concert)
11:00-11:30	Snack and drink
11:30-12:30	Creativity and arts / cooking and baking / gardening
12:30-13:30	Prepare lunch together
13:30-14:15	Eat lunch
14:15-16:00	Rest / nap/ listen to music
16:00-16:30	Coffee / tea and fruit
16:30-17:00	Exercise and movement
17:00-18:00	Adapted games / watching TV (nature channels, music, the senior channel 98, Youtube videos, etc.)
18:00-19:00	Visiting with family or friends via telephone/ Zoom/ Whatsapp
19:00-19:30	Prepare dinner
19:30-20:00	Eat dinner
20:00-21:30	Listen to music / read short stories
21:30-22:30	Prepare for sleep



5 Principles for suggesting an activity

- 1 Doing an activity should be a willful choice; encourage doing, but do not pressure the person with dementia.
- 2 Suggest the activity several times: an activity refused today may be accepted tomorrow.
- 3 Allow 2 choices – encourage choosing, while not overwhelming with too many options that may cause stress.
- 4 Remember that dementia sometimes allows the person to open up to activities and opportunities previously refused. They may let their guard down and partake in activities they refused in the past.
- 5 Dementia is an unstable illness; some days (even hours) may be better and others may be worse. The person with dementia may do an activity easily one day, and struggle with it on another day. Try suggesting an activity during different times in the days before deciding it may not be suitable.



■ Suggested activities per stage of illness

Initial stage of dementia

Characterized by

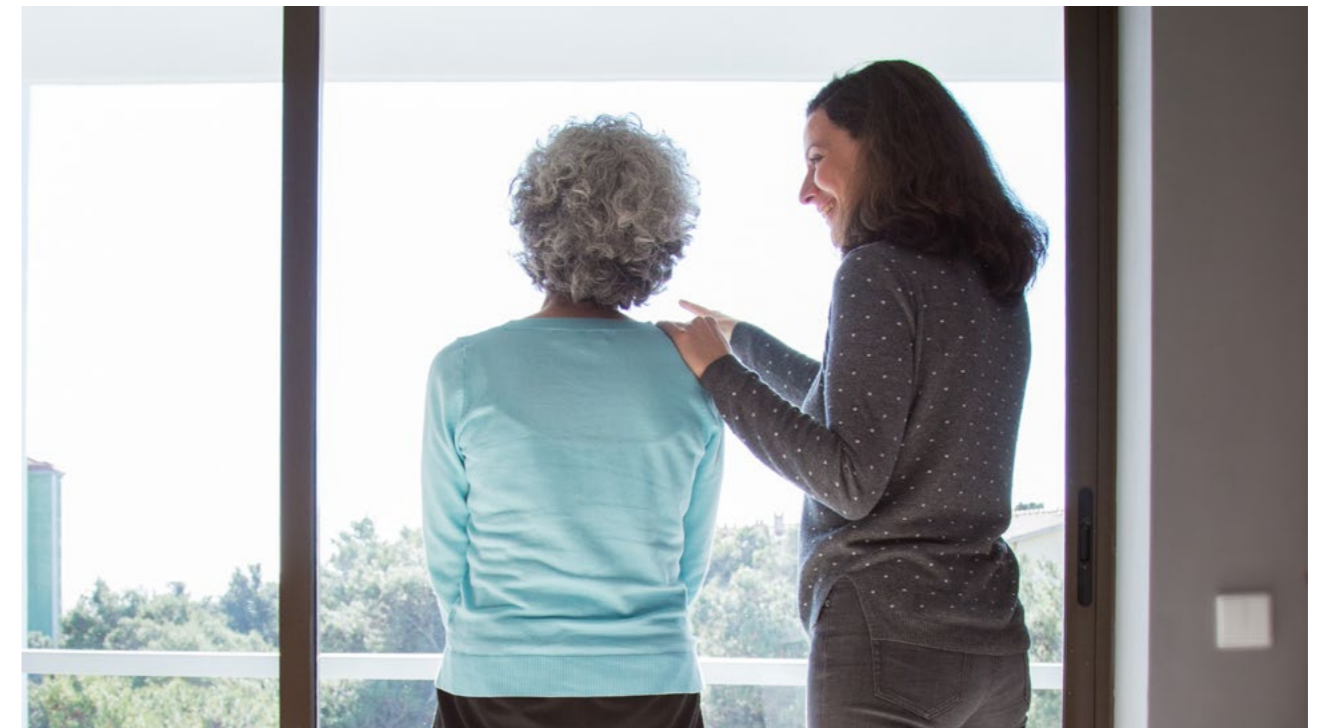
Usually within 1-2 years of receiving diagnosis, the person needs mild assistance with ADL (verbal encouragement or direction how to dress, where to find personal effects, etc.). The person understands and can converse with short sentences, sometimes with word disruptions, repeated questions and disorientation to time and space.

Guiding principles

1. At this stage, many caregivers search for an activity that will challenge the person, aiming to retain their cognitive ability. It is important to remember that for a person with dementia all activities are difficult to some degree. Therefore, you should strive to find an activity that is not too easy, while also not being frustrating (also known as "just the right challenge").
2. If possible, let the person continue activities they enjoyed in the past, even if they are not doing it as well as before. What matters is the process of engagement and not the product.

Suggested activities

- **Thinking activities:** Sudoku, crosswords, math exercises, reading newspapers and books, Griddlers.
- **Games:** Cards, Rummy, Backgammon, Dominoes, Checkers, Set, computer games (Candy Crush, 2048, Freecell).
- **Crafts:** Knitting, macramé, painting, sewing, ceramics, paper mâché, salt dough sculpting.
- **Movement:** Dancing to music, exercising with Youtube videos or TV.
- **Communication:** Surfing the web (looking for information, participating in social media, writing emails), watching concerts and shows on TV or the computer, video-chatting with family and friends.
- **Reminiscence:** Looking at photo albums, writing a life story with a family member (the exactness of the details is not important, the story as a whole is the main point), recording family recipes.



Moderate dementia (middle stage)

Characterized by

The person with dementia usually suffers from a significant decrease in number of words, uses short repetitive sentences, has difficulty recognizing mistakes or solving problems, has low initiative and needs encouragement to act, forgetting in mid action. In addition, a person with dementia at this stage needs help with self-care and may exhibit behavior changes such as refusing care, shouting, aggression, wandering and more.

Suggested activities:

- **Thinking activities:** Categorizing and matching items or pictures, putting items in canisters, using computer with guidance, reading newspapers and books, simple conversation.
- **Social:** Cooking and baking together, looking at picture albums and guided reminiscence.
- **Games:** Bingo, card games – War, lotto, categorization games, puzzles (not many pieces).
- **Movement:** Throwing a ball back and forth while seated, bowling with plastic bottles, throwing at targets on the floor, imitating exercises from Youtube or TV.
- **Crafts:** Drawing, coloring, simple weaving, easy sewing, salt dough sculpting.

Advanced dementia (late stage)

Characterized by

The person with dementia is only a shadow of who they once were, needing much help with all ADL, generally immobile, retaining few words, rarely recognizing items or people. Usually this stage is after more than 6 years of diagnosed dementia.

Guiding principles

1. The activities appropriate at this stage are those that the caregiver does to or for the person with dementia, while their involvement is minimal.
2. Eye movement and tracking is an indicator of the appropriateness of the activity, so that if the person's eyes are focused and engaged this indicates involvement in the activity.



Suggested activities

- Movement:
 - ✓ **Passing a ball:** Many persons can only catch a ball, which is fine. Take the ball from their hands and throw it again.
 - ✓ **Balloon volleyball:** Tapping a balloon back and forth and not letting it fall to the floor, which doesn't require much strength.
 - ✓ **Blowing bubbles:** The caregiver blows bubbles and the person with dementia can pop them with their fingers or follow their movement with their eyes.
 - ✓ **Tablet apps:** Some apps respond to light touches, such as a fishpond (called Water Garden) or creating fireworks (find at Google Play).
- Sensory stimulation:
 - ✓ **Scent:** Smell various scents: cinnamon, talcum powder, perfumes, vinegar, lemons, flowers, scented candles.

- ✓ **Vision:** Show pictures on a tablet, held at the proper angle and distance, or in an album, place a moving mobile or fish aquarium in a place convenient for watching.
- ✓ **Taste:** Try tasting various foods, such as chocolate, "Bamba", jams, whipped cream, lemons, tapenade (complying with recommended texture).
- ✓ **Touch:** Massage hands or feet with aromatic oil or cream, feel fur, fleece or stuffed animals.
- ✓ **Hearing:** Listen to music the person preferred which may awaken or calm them.

Links to activities and other materials

Keeping active during the coronavirus outbreak

Information from the Ministry of Health (in English)

<https://govextra.gov.il/ministry-of-health/corona/corona-virus-en/keep-active>

For exercise videos in Hebrew - please see [page 31](#)

Healthy lifestyles for the elderly during quarantine (in Russian)

<https://govextra.gov.il/ministry-of-health/corona-virus-ru/corona-virus-ru/healthy-routine-ru/healthy-routine-elderly-ru/>


Live cameras of animals and scenery all over the world <https://explore.org/livecams>

Booklet of ideas and activities for people in home quarantine (in Hebrew)

https://www.eshelnet.org.il/sites/default/files/CoronaHomeActivitiesHebrew_0.pdf

More ideas for activities at home at the Joint-Eshel coronavirus site (in Hebrew)

<http://jointeshel.inwise.net/Metapel3>

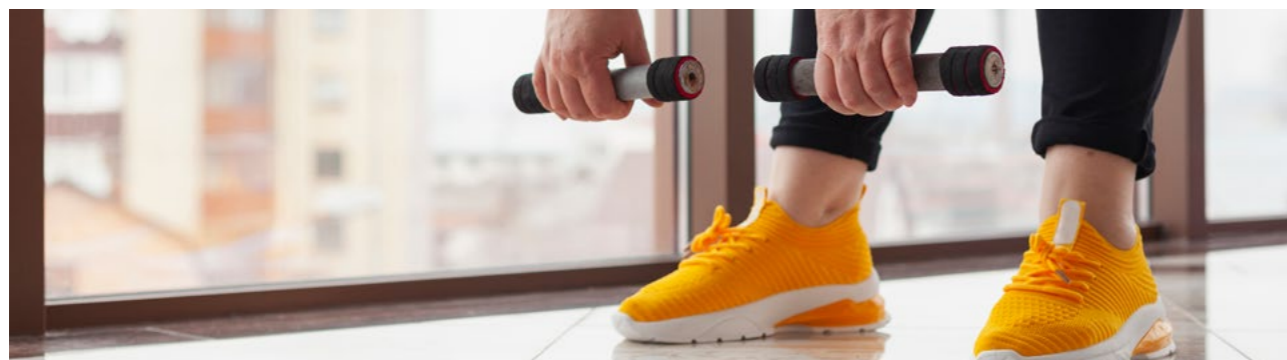


Physical exercise for a person with dementia during a period of social distancing and home isolation

Protection from the virus means staying at home, maintaining social distancing and disrupting usual routines. At this time, more than ever, physical exercise must be integrated into the daily schedule. Exercise aids in maintaining health, mobility and function, while also boosting a positive mood. The benefits of regular exercise are especially important and meaningful for the elderly and persons with dementia.

How to create a habit of exercising at home:

- Perform the exercises several times a day, even if for a short time. Every moment counts.
- Exercises should vary and be adapted to the abilities and wishes of the person doing them.
- Include exercises that incorporate the components of cardiovascular endurance, muscle strengthening, balance and flexibility.
- Incorporate movement games to increase motivation and enjoyment.
- Try to add upbeat music to boost participation and enjoyment.
- Use regular activities such as getting up from a chair, sitting down, reaching up to a high shelf and climbing stairs as exercise tasks, performing them several times throughout the day.
- The exercises may be done while sitting down, standing by a wall or table, laying down on a mat or lying in bed.
- If possible, in accordance with the Ministry of Health's directives, exercise outside – go for a walk, practice going up and down stairs while using the handrail and enjoy nature.



Suggestions for physical activity within the home

- Create a walking path using colored tape stuck on the floor. Walk on the path using various strategies: normal walking, side walking, with raised knees, dancing, etc.
- Use film clips and music to stimulate exercise and dancing.
- Use household items such as a filled water bottle as weights. You can practice weightlifting with one or two arms.
- Throw or kick a ball back and forth while seated.
- Sit across from another person and imitate his or her movements.
- Practice deep breathing and singing aloud.
- Play indoor bowling with plastic bottles.

Keep in mind safety precautions: Exercise with proper clothing and sport shoes; do not do exercises that cause pain, excess exertion or that risk balance.

Examples of seated exercise

Arm lifts

Objective: Mobility of the chest and shoulders.

Starting position: Sit straight in a chair, feet on the floor.

Exercise: Open the arms straight to the side and then raise them upwards. Stretch your hands towards the ceiling bring them together as high up as possible. Inhale while raising the arms. Exhale while bringing the arms down. Repeat slowly 5 times.



Opening arms diagonally

Objective: Spinal mobility

Starting position: Sit straight in a chair, feet on the floor.

Exercise: Raise and lower arms diagonally. Raise the right arm diagonally towards the ceiling while inhaling. Exhale while bringing the right arm towards the left foot. Follow the arm with your eyes. Repeat 4 times for each side.



Back twist

Objective: Spinal mobility.

Starting position: Sit straight in a chair, feet on the floor.

Exercise: Turn your back towards the right side and put your right elbow on the back of the chair. With your left hand, slightly push against the left knee while inhaling and exhaling. Repeat 4 times for each side.

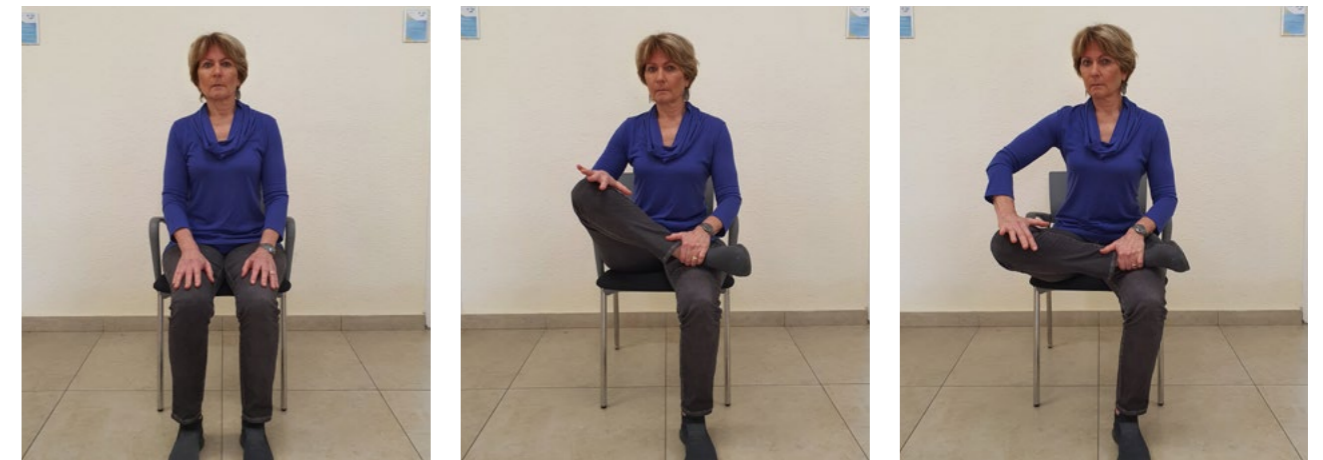


Thigh rotation

Objective: Mobility of the hip joint.

Starting position: Sit straight in a chair, feet on the floor.

Exercise: Put your right ankle on your left knee. With your right hand, slightly press down on the left knee. Count to 10 and release. Repeat for both legs.



Knee lifts

Objective: Cardiovascular endurance.

Starting position: Sit straight in a chair, feet on the floor.

Exercise: "Walking" in place. Walk in place while lifting the knees up high. You should remember to breathe throughout and feel slight exertion. Try to do this exercise for at least 2 minutes or more.



Examples of standing exercises

Note: Standing exercises should be done slowly. In case of dizziness or imbalance, immediately return to sitting.

Standing up

Objective: Strengthening thigh muscles.

Starting position: Sit straight in a chair, feet on the floor.

Exercise: Stand up from sitting. Sit in the chair and stand up. If needed, use the armrests. Slowly repeat 10 times or more.



Rising on tiptoe

Objective: Strengthening calf muscles.

Starting position: Stand straight. Hold on to a stable object or surface.

Exercise: Rise up on your toes, continuously holding on to the object or surface and then slowly back down. Repeat 20 times or more.



Sideways leg raise

Objective: Strengthen leg muscles.

Starting position: Stand straight. Hold on to stable object or surface.

Exercise: Lift your right leg straight out to the right side as high as you can. Count to 3 and slowly return to starting position. Repeat 10 times or more for each leg.



Back leg lift

Objective: Strengthen and lengthen leg muscles.

Starting position: Stand straight. Hold on to steady object or surface.

Exercise: Lift your right leg straight and back as far as you can. Count to 3 and return to starting position. Repeat 10 times or more for each leg.



Knee lifts

Objective: Mobility of the knees.

Starting position: Stand straight. Hold on to stable object or surface.

Exercise: Bend your right knee as far back as you can. Repeat 10 times for each leg.



Walk in place

Objective: Cardiovascular endurance

Starting position: Stand straight. Hold on to stable object or surface.

Exercise: Walk in place, lifting knees high up. You should feel slight exertion. Continue breathing throughout the exercise. You may rest if needed.



Knee bends

Objective: Strengthening leg muscles.

Starting position: Stand straight. Hold on to stable object or surface.

Exercise: Bend both knees as much as you can. Count to 3 and stand back up. Repeat 10 times or more.



Home exercise for the elderly, from the Ministry of Health (in Hebrew)

Movement exercises:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WG5lNKau6ZM&list=PLfrA70Eks2HK7fiOBhk6688qA7DlGJov&index=6>

Seated exercises: <https://youtu.be/atrzETHtbfk>

Home exercises: <https://youtu.be/R6noHe2EEps>

More home exercises: <https://youtu.be/31G-8qjwJ4E>



Communicating with a person with dementia

Dementia is characterized by difficulties with memory and orientation, behavior changes and gradual loss of communicative abilities. All these make communicating with a person with dementia significantly challenging.

Tips and techniques for coping with communication difficulties:

1. **Focus and concentrate:** Before you approach a person with dementia, take a moment to calm and steady yourself. Close your eyes, take 3 deep breaths. With each breath inhale and imagine exhaling what is bothering you.
2. **Make sure the person with dementia is using their glasses or hearing aid,** if needed.
3. **Try to have the discussion in a quiet place.**
4. **Find the appropriate distance:** in early stages the proper distance for talking to a person with dementia is the distance you usually keep with others. As the dementia progresses and the person becomes more inwardly oriented, you will need to be physically closer.



Be aware:

- ✓ The appropriate distance is different for each person
- ✓ During the Coronavirus pandemic, you should move closer only when you are wearing protective gear on face and hands, according to the social distancing protocol. If you live with a person, protective gear is not necessary.

5. **Maintain steady eye contact:** Make sure that your eyes are at the same level (i.e., if the person is sitting – you should sit as well).
6. **Watch and adjust your body language and facial expression to theirs.**
7. **Be empathetic.**
8. **Speak slowly and in short sentences.**
9. **Use a clear and caring tone of voice.**
10. **Allow enough time for understanding, processing and responding.**



Empathetic listening: Allow the person to express what they feel and acknowledge with understanding.

How can you improve communication?

Verbal communication

- **Repeat what is said,** to reflect that you understand them.
- **Ask questions** about what they are saying: If they have difficulty answering open ended questions, ask yes and no questions or offer 2 possibilities to choose an answer from.
- Ask **what is "the most"** (annoying, upsetting, frustrating) about the issue they are addressing, so that they may express their feelings.
- If you do not understand what the person is saying, try to continue the conversation by **repeating the words** that you do understand, asking about them, as well as **responding to their feelings** rather than their words.
- If the person is non-verbal, continue to use words. Try to understand and express what you are picking up from the **facial expressions and body language.** Pay attention to how they react to what you are saying whether confirming or denying with their eyes, their head movements or their body.

Touch

- During the Corona pandemic, if you do not live with the person, you need to use protective gear to touch.
- If you have not touched the person, request permission to do so, in order to find out if they want to be touched. The more detached and non-verbal the person is, the more touch is necessary.
- Put your arm around them to communicate, "I am with you".

Music

- Music can assist communication, especially for non-verbal persons with dementia.
- It is important to find the right music for the person, probably music they enjoyed in the past.
- You can use earphones to play the music for better sound quality and minimizing background noise.
- You can sing at a volume or rhythm that seems appropriate for the emotional state they are in (happy, calm, agitated) and invite them to join in.

Using phone and online communication

- The telephone: If the person is interested in speaking on the phone, you can have a long and meaningful conversation, even if you don't fully understand the content.
- Online platforms such as Zoom, Skype, Whatsapp can cause confusion, joy or both. Try them out with the person with dementia, see how they react and then decide.

General communication tips for dementia:

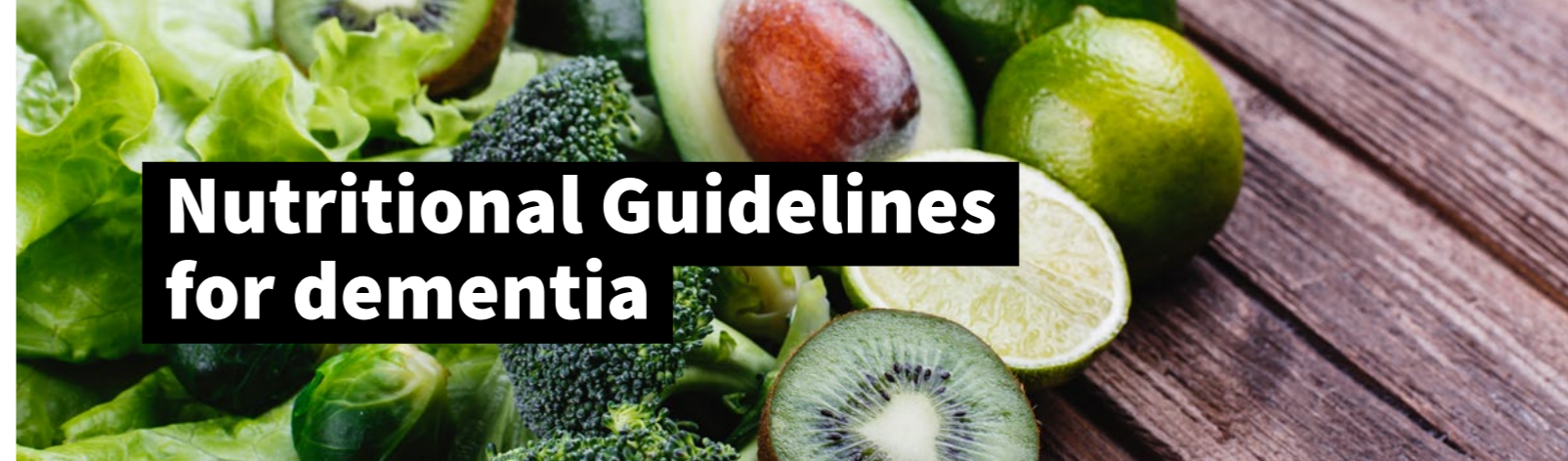
- The subjective reality of the person with dementia is more important than the objective reality.
- Do not correct or try to distract; do not lie or try to change their behavior.
- Try to identify what human need is reflected by their behavior (need for love/security/respect, toileting needs), and take steps to meet those needs..
- If the person is holding an object or making repetitive motions these may symbolize something for him, try to understand what they may be and what it means for him. Do not try to take the object away or to stop the motions.

Validation

Validation therapy is a communicative approach for persons with dementia developed by Naomi Feil. The approach is unique in that it recognizes words and actions of the person with dementia respectfully and emphatically, without embarrassment, anger, or ignorance.

To learn more about this approach and how to utilize it, you may look up online, for example: <https://vfvalidation.org>.

For books on Validation Method in Hebrew, please see the Eshel publication:
https://www.eshelnet.org.il/books?search_api_views_fulltext=%D7%AA%D7%99%D7%A7%D7%95%D7%A3&field_catalog_fields=All&field_language=All&field_catalog_target=All&field_book_type=All&=%D7%97%D7%A4%D7%A9.



Nutritional Guidelines for dementia

Food and eating are important for satisfaction, enjoyment and quality of life as well as for maintaining health, function and preventing deterioration.

Persons with dementia experience changes regarding eating and nutrition due to the changes in memory, orientation, function and organization, as well as changes to chewing and swallowing, appetite loss and mood swings.

Eating difficulties and nutrition are a complex challenge for caregivers. These difficulties may be exacerbated by the need for social distancing and the accompanying anxiety and worrying.



Remember:

A change in schedule, loneliness and lack of activity may cause reactions of emotional difficulty, depression, anxiety and agitation. These may manifest in wandering during the day or night, difficulty concentrating and trouble sitting in one place. These phenomena may affect the desire to eat, as well as the act of eating and consuming food. A person with dementia who frequently wanders, burns a high amount of calories in the process, leading to weight loss, which is further aggravated by lack of proper nutrition.

As the dementia progresses, there may be situations raising your concern about your loved one's nutrition. For example, you may notice that though you dedicate much time to feeding, the amount of food the person eats is small or they may be losing weight. In this case, you should consult professionals, to find the best way to help the person with dementia. Your family doctor can refer you to a dietitian for nutritional consultation or a speech pathologist in case of suspected swallowing difficulties.

Eating and food consumption – what to watch for:

Generally, eating is more complex than just putting food in your mouth. Here are several aspects to consider:

Food supply and storage

- Make sure there are adequate amounts of a variety of foods in the house and that they are well stored. This is especially important for persons with dementia that live alone, even more so when day centers where they were served hot meals are closed.
- Family, friends, and neighbors should check daily regarding availability of food, as well as do grocery shopping every few days. Contact Social Services if issues about food supply arise.

Food shopping

- Leave a pad of paper and a pen in central spot in the kitchen to make a list of groceries you run out of. If possible, include the person with dementia to list the items.
- If there is difficulty leaving the house you can utilize food delivery services, shop online or ask a family member or others not living with you to do the shopping and leave it at the door.



Preparing meals

- Check that the food in the fridge and pantry is not spoiled or unhealthy, and if needed dispose of it discreetly, so as not to hurt the person's feelings.
- If the person with dementia lives alone, you can organize prepared meals in the fridge with notes ('lunch for tomorrow' or 'breakfast') and call to remind them to go to the fridge and get out the meal. Have a tracking chart for marking 'I ate breakfast'.
- While preparing hot beverages, ensure the person with dementia can use the kettle without getting burned. If needed, assist in preparing the beverage.
- Organize the kitchen so that dishes for daily use are within reach.
- Prepare food of the proper texture for the person's swallowing ability (i.e., soft and cut-up cooked chicken, pureed food such as smashed meatballs with gravy, etc.).
- It is possible to prepare food for a few days at a time and keep in the fridge in opaque boxes. This can keep the food fresh, while preventing overeating.

The eating environment

- Ensure that the eating environment is quiet and calm with few distractions, especially when there are swallowing issues and unrest.
- Ensure that the environment allows for safe eating while seated and that the plate of food is in front of the person. Pay attention to the lighting, comfort of sitting and distance from table while seated.
- Maintain eating habits in proper places at home, such as at the dining table or at a table, on the balcony or in the garden.
- If the person wears glasses or a hearing aid, make sure they use them while eating.

Eating throughout the day

- Divide the daily food intake into 6 small meals throughout the day. Drinking is recommended before or after a meal, and less so during the meal, so as not to fill the stomach with water.
- If the person is awake at night, you can also use the time for a meal.
- Avoid keeping unhealthy snacks, such as cookies or sweets, where they are easily accessible. Instead, you could place a bowl of cut veggies or fruit for snacking between meals.

Eating

- Ensure that the food is appetizing; nicely served, varied in flavors, scents and colors. Smelling food while it is being prepared is a way to whet the appetite.
- If the person with dementia is interested in eating on their own but is unable to hold a utensil, serve finger foods.



- If it seems the food is distasteful to the person, check if it is at the proper temperature, well-seasoned (salt, sugar) or overly seasoned (too spicy or bad flavor).
- If there is an increased demand for sweets- offer sweet healthy foods such as fruit slices, fruit salad, yogurt with fruit, chocolate milk or dried fruit (if they can be chewed). If these are not satisfying, try to provide small portions of sweets each time, such as one biscuit or one piece of chocolate.

Drinking

- If the person with dementia lives alone, try to create a drinking routine; mark 7 bottles of water according to the days of the week and guide the person with dementia to open the bottle for that day.
- If the person with dementia refuses to drink say 'the doctor says you need to drink' or try adding drinking to a pleasant ritual such as 'Mom, I made you a cup of coffee/tea that you like so we can drink together'.
- If you live apart, you might decide on an hour when you both make coffee and drink together while on the phone or video chatting.

Guidelines for safe eating

- Notice chewing and swallowing difficulties, such as a person holding the food in their mouth, chewing for a long time, coughing during or after drinking or eating. In these cases, you should consult a professional (doctor, speech pathologist, and dietitian).
- Persons with dementia need longer times for eating meals. You should allow an hour per meal.
- Make sure the person's mouth is empty at the end of the meal.
- Wait 30-45 minutes after the meal before transferring them to a lying position.

After the meal

- Ensure mouth hygiene – make sure the mouth is clean of leftover food. If they use dentures, wash them after each meal. Use a soft toothbrush and a toothpaste the person likes.
- Cleaning the mouth should be done gently and carefully so as not to cause injury or induce vomiting.

Preventing constipation

Many people, especially elders, complain of constipation that may be accompanied by pain, bloating, and straining on the toilet, which can lead to hemorrhoids and bleeding. Constipation and its consequences can cause loss of appetite and influence general health. Persons with dementia may often not be verbal about how they feel or complain when they suffer from constipation. Based on their facial expressions and body language, we may see that they are suffering.

How can you help a person reduce constipation?

- Make sure they drink enough water
- Make sure they eat enough fiber in foods such as vegetables, whole grain bread and more. Seek professional advice from a dietitian about a fiber rich diet.
- Encourage physical exercise (suitable to their functional ability).
- Try to create a regular toileting schedule, for example after breakfast.
- **If these do not help, consult a doctor.**

Fiber rich foods to include the daily diet

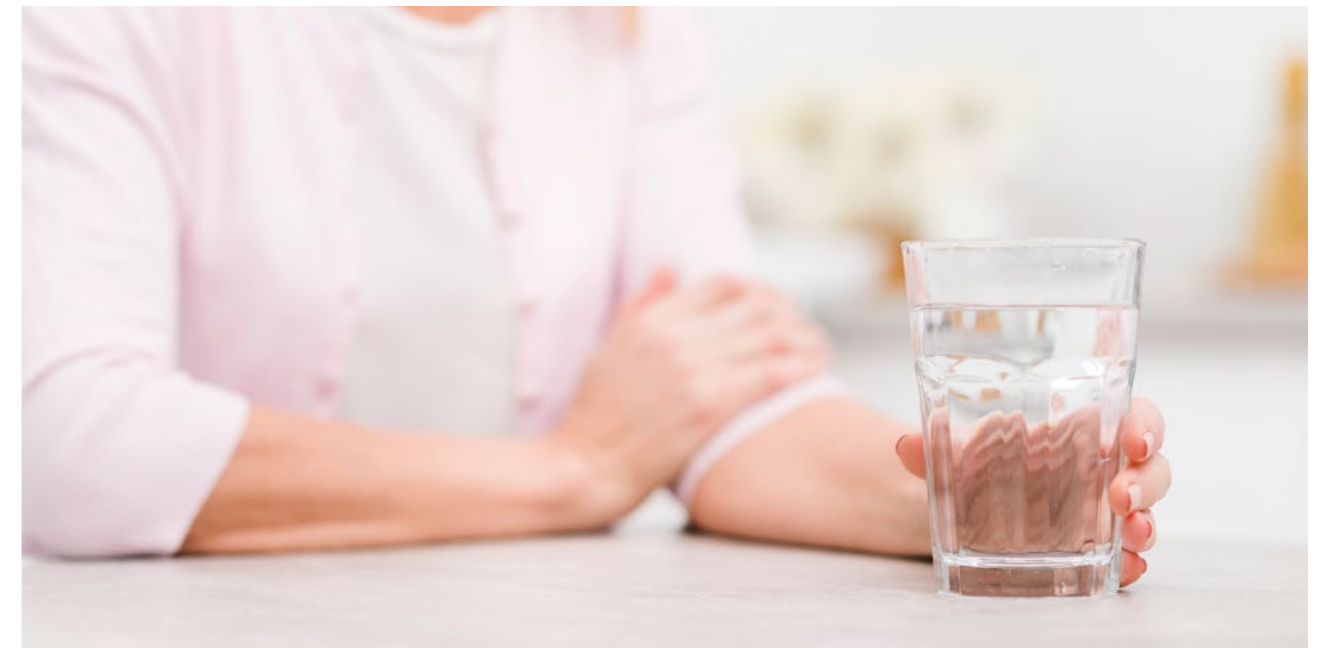
It is recommended to include these foods in the diet of a person with dementia, according to their cognitive and functional ability and in consultation with a professional.

- **Whole grains:** whole wheat bread, oats, brown rice, noodles and pasta from whole grains, buckwheat, corn.
- **Legumes:** beans in all forms and colors, peas, chickpeas, lentils etc.
- **Fruits and vegetables of all colors and varieties:** Wash well and serve with the peel if possible. During and in between meals you should serve fresh fruit and vegetables - cucumber slices, celery and carrot sticks, fruit slices - cut up and served as an alternative to salty or sweet snacks.



Guidelines for encouraging drinking

- Generally, it is recommended to drink between meals.
- The recommended amount of water depends on the weather, the amount of salt consumed, body weight and level of physical activity.
- You know if a person is drinking enough by the color of their urine: if it is a light color, it is enough; if it is yellow or darker, they need to drink more.
- The recommended drink is water. Serve it at the preferred temperature (cold or room temperature). In order to vary the flavor you can add lemon slices, mint leaves, etc. The glass should be clear so that the person can see what is in it and explain 'Dad, here is glass of cold water/ tea with lemon/ fresh orange juice/ lemonade'.



- It is best not to drink too much green and black tea, coffee, cocoa, cola, or energy drinks as they contain caffeine. Too much caffeine may cause difficulty falling asleep, agitation, nervousness, shaking, increased urination, disrupt heart rhythm and indigestion.
- In advanced stages of dementia you can serve sweetened drinks to encourage drinking, such as tamarind or almond juice.

For further information, see the Ministry of Health booklet on nutrition for persons with dementia:

In Hebrew: https://www.health.gov.il/PublicationsFiles/Dementia_Nutrition.pdf

In English: https://www.health.gov.il/PublicationsFiles/Dementia_Nutrition_en.pdf

In Russian: https://www.health.gov.il/PublicationsFiles/Dementia_Nutrition_Ru.pdf



Emotional wellbeing of persons with dementia

In general, emotional and behavioral symptoms are a part of dementia, whether as a direct result of brain changes or as a reaction to them;

- Emotional symptoms include apathy, anxiety, depression, delusions and hallucinations.
- Behavioral symptoms may include crying, psychomotor excitability, aggression, etc.
- Symptoms vary over time and change as the illness progresses. They are also influenced by the person's premorbid personality, the way the environment responds to them and other variables.

The Corona days may be emotionally challenging for some persons with dementia, while others may not take notice. Many of the challenges are caused by changes in the daily schedule, especially for people who attended day centers, were used to taking long walks outside or had daily visits with family members.

Emotional difficulty related to these changes may be due to:

1. The changes are not understood – why are the family members not visiting? Why is the day center closed?
2. The disappearance of significant social supports such as the schedule of the day center, getting fresh air outside, letting out energy by walking or warmth and security from family visits.

Advice for coping with possible events:

Lack of understanding that causes anxiety and unrest

- If the person with dementia is in the early stage, explain the situation in easy to understand terms, so as not to frighten them. For example, "There is a contagious disease going around and people were told to stay home so as not to get sick. We are worried about you and therefore it is important to us that you stay home. We hope that everything will go back to normal soon."
- Even if this explanation is comforting, you will most likely need to repeat it more than once.

- If they do not understand the explanation, or if it causes anxiety, try to utilize white lies, such as "it is a holiday now", "the day center is closed for repairs", "the children are abroad". These may be received without causing alarm.
- In all cases, refrain from listening too often to the news broadcast and prefer music or entertaining TV shows.

Anxiety attack

If the person with dementia has an anxiety attack, think:

- What caused it to happen just now? For example, does it have to do with listening to the news? Were they bored or inactive? Were they unable to complete a task?
- If you recognize a possible reason, try to help them. For example, turn the TV off, distract them to a more pleasant subject and help them do the task.

Refusal to shower

Showers may cause distress, especially the necessary undressing;

- Try to shower one body part at a time with a damp sponge
- Use music and talking while in the shower
- Reduce your demands reasonably, regarding the frequency and thoroughness of the shower.

Wanting to "go home"

When the person with dementia "wants to go home" (because the home they remember is their childhood home);

You can go out for a short time period and then return, or try to use Validation Therapy, and accept their inner reality without arguing with them.

Searching for people

If the person with dementia is switching between people who are present with others "Where is my wife? You are not my wife!", you can go out of the room, change clothes and return "Were you looking for me?".





Remember: creativity and flexibility are key

Lack of social supports (such as day centers)

- Lack of the usual social supports may cause a void and require creative solutions in order to find relevant alternatives.
- For those who attended a day center, try to remember that it had a blessed routine that included: getting organized in the morning, hygiene and getting dressed routines, leaving the house for an appropriate activity (not too frustrating or challenging) and a social gathering. Therefore, try to think what may enable keeping such a routine:
 - ✓ Getting organized in the morning
 - ✓ Scheduled mealtimes
 - ✓ Activities throughout the day

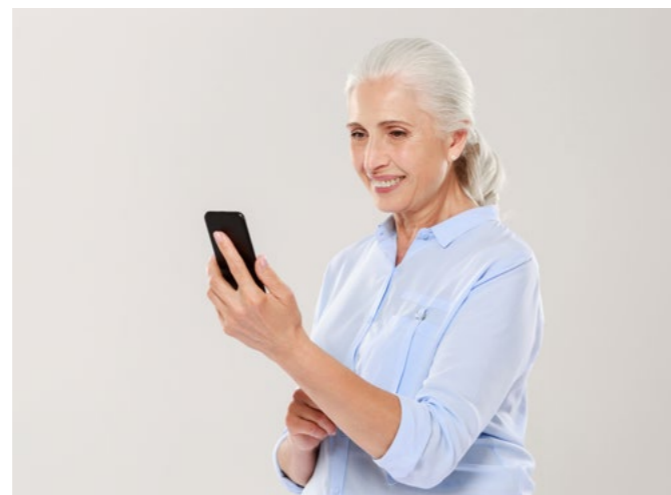


Examples of activities can be found in this booklet (in Hebrew):

https://www.eshelnet.org.il/sites/default/files/CoronaHomeActivitiesHebrew_0.pdf

More advice for emotional wellbeing

- Leaving the house often is necessary for a person's emotional wellbeing. You may do so according to the directives of the Ministry of Health: stay close by, for a short while and distanced from others.
- It is important to stay in touch via phone or online with family and friends, while people living with you can provide physical support and touch.



What should you do if the person with dementia shows mental and behavioral symptoms?

- First, you should check if the symptoms are causing distress, and for whom? Not every symptom requires attention and treatment.
 - ✓ For example, a state in which the person is having pleasant hallucinations about their parents and enjoying it - may alarm others but does not require treatment.
 - ✓ Crying may be an expression of various emotions, including excitement, and not necessarily depression.
 - ✓ Much sleep during the day may be a blessing at this point, if it does not pose a health risk (pressure sore) or harm nighttime sleep.
- If the symptoms cause distress, try to characterize them:
 - ✓ What is the frequency and degree of severity?
 - ✓ Is there something stimulating that should be avoided or calming that should be used as assistance?



Remember – the environment's ability to provide an emotional holding ground, non-confrontative communication and physical touch play an important role in ensuring feelings of safety and calmness in the person.

When to seek professional assistance?

- If the environment is unable to emotionally hold the person and their behavior.
- If there is a clear danger to the person or their environment.
- If you notice a dramatic change in their behavior or emotional state – sudden lack of sleep or psychomotor excitability. Changes such as these may be due to a physical condition that requires medical attention (infection, pain, etc.).



Remember – Family doctors and mental health clinics continue to be active during this time. Medication may help.



Maintaining emotional wellbeing of family members living with the person with dementia

If you live with a person with dementia. It is important that you also take care of your own mental health, especially in face of the anxiety and uncertainty you are experiencing.

Avoid:

Self-criticism and guilt for moments in which you are impatient, short tempered or exhausted. In normal times you are burdened with a lot and now even more so.

Remember you do not need to be perfect, just be as good as you can be.

Some advice to assist you:

- Try to create a routine
- Make time for yourself to take a time-out as needed (at least going out of the house or into another room).
- Make sure to exercise, even if only for a short while inside.
- Keep in close contact with family and friends via phone or other digital devices.
- Enlist other family members to assist you and the persons with dementia.
- Stay in touch with support groups and/or other families of persons with dementia.
- Get help from professionals, such as family doctors and mental health services.

Together we will get through this



Maintaining emotional wellbeing - for caregivers of persons with dementia

These are difficult times for people all over the world. The need to stay at home in lockdown, to socially distance and not meet friends, to be away from people we love, to change plans and routines, to cancel vacations and holiday celebrations - these are affecting us all.

Being a caregiver to a person with dementia is always a demanding role, now even more so. Taking care of yourself is an important aspect of being able to provide good care to the person with dementia

Examples of self-care and caregiver support:

- **Physical exercise:** Staying at home for a long period of time may be difficult. Exercising is beneficial not only for your muscles and your body, but also for your mood and your immune system. Physical activity unwinds the negative effects of stress and helps you feel healthy and energetic.
 - ✓ **Choosing your activity:** To find the right exercises for you, look online; YouTube has many videos with short exercise routines. You could find a routine that works for you and try to do it daily. It could be a conventional exercise routine or something like Laughter Yoga or Chair Yoga.
 - ✓ **Laughter yoga:** An exercise program for health and wellbeing, a combination of laughter exercises with yoga breathing techniques (Pranayama). You can find videos of Laughter Yoga online, for example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fq4kTZuLops>. Though Laughter Yoga is often done in groups, you can enjoy the benefits of it by doing it on your own at home, preferably in front of a mirror.
 - ✓ **Chair yoga:** is a gentle form of yoga that can be done sitting on a chair or standing on the ground while using the chair for support. It can improve your flexibility, concentration and strength, while boosting your mood and reducing stress. You can find basic exercises online, for example: <https://www.verywellfit.com/chair-yoga-poses-3567189>.

- **Going out of the house:** If possible and weather permitting - go outside every day. It does not need to be for a long time, even for 10-30 minutes close to the house. Going out will give you an opportunity to refresh, change atmosphere and relax.
- **Keeping up to date:** It is important to listen to the news from time to time and be updated on the current situation and regulations, yet avoid watching the news too much as it may make you stressed or anxious.
- **Personal protective equipment:** You should follow the up-to-date regulations to prevent the spread of infection. Note that persons with dementia may show signs of insecurity or fear when people around them are using masks.
- **Coping with behavior changes:** Behavioral changes among persons with dementia may get worse when there is stress around them; this may be challenging for the caregiver. You may find yourself frustrated or impatient with the person with dementia. This is understandable, and if this happens, take a short "time out". It is important to know there are ways to cope with these difficulties, for example, you may consider using "Validation Therapy" which has a positive effect in these situations. In addition, there is room to be more relaxed about accomplishing tasks, for example allowing the person with dementia to sleep later in the morning when they do not need to get to the day center. For further information, see the section on "Communicating with a person with dementia" in the booklet.
- **Share, talk, be verbal:** If you feel that you need help or support in providing care, communicate this to family and other caregivers. Do not wait until the last moment; discuss with them what you need, reach out for their help and support, so that you would be able to provide the best care for the person with dementia.
- **Activities and routine:** Some daily activities may vary but having meals / exercise / walks / naps / hobbies at scheduled times will help you and the person you are caring for get through the day. It is important to establish a routine, that will be an alternative to the previous routine you and the person with dementia had before the Corona virus outbreak.
For you, the caregiver, try to find time for your own activities. Perhaps there is something you would like to learn and can do using online materials. Perhaps you have a hobby or an activity that calms or energizes you - try doing that daily.
For the person with dementia, there are many activities that can be done at home. You may offer the favorite activities repeatedly, day after day, and try to have them participate in household chores as much as they can as long as they like it. There are also online resources for activities. You may find the list at the end of this section quite useful. Take care to match activities with the person's capability and your familiarity with his preferences. (For further information please see the section on "[Day planning during a time of social distancing](#)" in this booklet).

Help Resources:

- **Emda** - Alzheimer's association in Israel hotline: *8889
- **Alzheimer's Center in Ramat Gan** hotline: 03-5599333
- **Melabev** - Alzheimer and Dementia care hotline: 02-6537591
- **Ezer Mizion** - Tzipporah Fried Alzheimer Support Center hotline: 073-3956807

List of home activities for persons with dementia

Important: The process of engaging in the activity is more important than the product

1. Fold laundry/ clothes/ sort and fold pairs of socks
2. Count old money, mostly coins, and put into canister or piggybank
3. Sweep the floor with broom, use dust-cloth
4. Read aloud from a book or newspaper
5. Bake cookies/muffins/bread
6. Gardening - indoors or outdoors
7. Look at pictures
8. Play catch with a ball
9. Color or paint a picture
10. Prepare juice (lemon, orange)
11. Throw a ball back and forth
12. Sing familiar songs
13. Do simple crafts (Pinterest has many ideas)
14. Knitting or embroidery
15. Reminisce with picture albums or objects
16. Roll yarn into balls
17. Arrange flowers
18. Cut out simple shapes and glue them on paper for a collage or wish board
19. Put drawers and closets in order
20. Home manicure /pedicure
21. Use sandpaper to smooth pieces of wood
22. Write letters to loved ones
23. Make popcorn
24. Sort cards by color/ shape/ number, etc.
25. Make a family tree
26. Card games: Rummy, Go fish, Taki, War
27. Watch a familiar movie
28. Blow soap bubbles
29. Make figures and beads out of Fimo/ salt dough/ Das, etc.
30. Make a bead necklace
31. Clean and shine silverware
32. Do a puzzle
33. Play games on a tablet or computer
34. Separate legumes by shape or color
35. Sensory boxes: put rice/ couscous/ lentils in a box and put small objects in them for rummaging
36. Balloon volleyball with several balloons



State of Israel
Ministry of Health
משרד הבריאות

National Program for Addressing Alzheimer's Disease
and Other Types of Dementia