



Information for People Living with Dementia - 05

## ABOUT YOU... LIVING ALONE

**If you have been diagnosed with dementia, and you live alone, this Help Sheet may be useful.**

Increasingly people are living alone, whether by choice or circumstance. Many people will be living on their own when they are diagnosed with dementia. They will continue to live successfully on their own for some time by developing and using strategies, routines and support that best suit their individual needs.

**“If I did not have the help I receive, I would not be able to live at home and have my independence” Marie who lives with dementia.**

This help sheet provides information about the support that is available to you, including the key points of contact and examples of strategies people use to live well independently.

### Types of support

People value their independence, therefore asking for help and accepting it can sometimes be very difficult. Where possible, let family and friends know what aspects of living are hard for you and how they can support you.

**Medicare** Part A (Hospital Insurance) and/or Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance) covers eligible home health services like these:

- Intermittent skilled nursing care
- Physical therapy
- Speech-language pathology services
- Continued occupational services, and more

Usually, a home health care agency coordinates the services your doctor orders for you.

### Strategies people use when living alone

You probably already use various strategies to support yourself, but you may also find the following ideas and strategies to be of assistance.

Alzheimer’s Association has information resources that may help. Visit <https://www.alz.org/i-have-alz/if-you-live-alone.asp>

### Maintain your wellbeing

Continue to do what you can, and seek support in any areas where you may need assistance to live a life that is personally meaningful.



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Continue to take care of yourself. Eat a healthy diet that includes lots of fresh vegetables and fruit, and keep hydrated. Keep yourself mobile and active, sleep well and treat any pain and medical problems you may have.

Stay connected with friends, family and community. Use voluntary and funded services for support to do what you enjoy and learn new things. For example, activities like sports, dancing, yoga, art, music, writing, crafts, technology, educational, spiritual, social and environmental interests.

#### **Create a comfortable, safe, functional home**

A comfortable, safe, and well-functioning home is essential for your independence. People have found the following strategies helpful if they have problems with memory, distance perception, organization and sorting out the steps in tasks.

It is helpful to declutter cupboards, arrange furniture to enable clear pathways around the house, seal carpet edges, and contrast the color of everyday objects with surrounding surfaces. The use of night lights, sensors and timed automatic appliances can also assist with safety around the house. Use item finding devices to help locate any lost items such as keys, wallets/purses or glasses, or give a set of keys to a trusted person.

It also helps to use visual cues and prompts such as sticking instructions beside appliances, and keeping a list of emergency contacts next to the phone. When shopping, try to avoid areas that are busy and noisy, and take a shopping list with you. Before visiting the doctor, write down any questions you have and take it with you. Ask your doctor for written instructions and reminders for when you are due for your next appointment. The use of supportive aids such as desk planners and dementia aid clocks can also assist with keeping track of dates and times.

#### **Safeguard yourself from potential abuse**

People who live alone can potentially be more at risk of financial, emotional and physical abuse. It is important to talk to someone you trust if you feel that your wellbeing may be compromised in any way.

#### **Plan for your future**

It can be hard to think about the future, but early planning can safeguard your choices. Put in place legal tools such as enduring guardianship, enduring power of attorney, Wills and advance care plans. If circumstances change, or if you change your mind later, you can always adjust your plans accordingly.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:** locally call Dementia Friendly Wyoming 307-461-7134 or visit our website <http://www.dwfsheridan.org> or The Sheridan Senior Center 307-672-2240. Nationally contact the Alzheimer's Association at 1-800-272-3900, or visit their website at <http://www.alz.org>.