

## Be Ready for an Emergency Department Visit



Whether it is a planned admission or an unexpected emergency visit, the unfamiliar noises and activities of a hospital can be especially upsetting for a person living with dementia. Preparation can improve a visit. **Be Ready for an Emergency Department Visit** is a series of handy checklists and forms for a person with dementia to fill out with a family member, friend, or caregiver. Complete these forms *before* a trip to the hospital is necessary, so that the person with dementia is ready to go. The information provided on these forms will help you communicate the person's needs, making it possible for hospital staff to provide more personalized care.

**Download the checklist to get started ►**

Use the checklist as a guide to work through each of the tools in this series:

- About Me
- Who Knows Me Best
- My Medications
- My Wishes
- My Ready-to-Go Bag
- Plan Ahead for Going Home



Name \_\_\_\_\_ 

## About Me

**Last updated:**\_\_\_\_\_  
month day year**Give this sheet  
to the nurse.**

I like to be called \_\_\_\_\_

This caregiver knows me best \_\_\_\_\_

My address is \_\_\_\_\_

I have a ready-to-go bag.  Yes  No

My bag has important information about me. It has items I need.

I am registered with the MedicAlert® Safely Home® program.

 Yes  No

My ID number is \_\_\_\_\_.

My information can be accessed by calling Hotline 1-800-407-7717

**My doctor says that I have dementia or Alzheimer's disease.****I get confused easily, and I can't always remember things.**I might feel overwhelmed, worried, or upset. **What helps me?**

\_\_\_\_\_

I might feel restless, agitated, or panicky. **What helps me?**

\_\_\_\_\_

I have problems describing my medical history. **Who can help you?**

\_\_\_\_\_

I might ask the same question again and again. **What helps me?**

\_\_\_\_\_

I might walk away. **What can help you and me?**

\_\_\_\_\_

### Older Adult Alert!

#### These things may be hard for me:

- ▶ being in a noisy waiting room
- ▶ lying in bed for a long time
- ▶ using a call button
- ▶ being alone
- ▶ any medical devices placed on me

### Older Adult Alert!

#### When I am sick, and there is a change in what I can do, consider:

- ▶ delirium
- ▶ untreated pain
- ▶ effects of medication
- ▶ a new medical problem
- ▶ an unrecognized infection

### What can help me be my best?

Not being alone ■ Being with the caregiver who knows me best ■ Having a quiet place to wait ■ Sitting in a comfortable chair ■ Having a blanket ■ Taking care of my basic needs ■ Reassuring me ■ Including me

## Before I came to the emergency department, I could do these things.

### Before I was sick: Talking

Items with checkmarks (✓) apply to me. 

- I talk easily.
- I don't talk very much.
- I don't understand English well. I understand this language: \_\_\_\_\_
- Who can help you?** \_\_\_\_\_
- I don't hear very well. Look at me when you talk to me.

### Before I was sick: Getting around

- I can walk by myself.
- I can get around on my own. I use: ○ a cane ○ a walker ○ a wheelchair
- I like to have someone's arm for help.

### Before I was sick: Using the bathroom

- I need help: ○ getting to the bathroom ○ using the bathroom
- I use incontinence products:
  - pads ○ pull ons ○ adult briefs (like Attends®, Depend®, TENA®)

More →

### Before I was sick: Eating and Drinking

- I can eat and drink on my own.
- I choke easily.
- I need to use a straw.
- I need help to set up my food.
- I need reminders to keep eating.
- I need help holding a glass.
- I need someone to feed me.
- I need thickened liquids.
- I do not know when I am thirsty. Remind me to drink.
- I have a special diet:

### Before I was sick: Hearing and Vision

- I wear glasses.
- I have hearing aid(s):  RT  LT
- I am not able to hear.
- I am legally blind.
- Ask my caregiver to check my hearing aid batteries.



Last updated:

\_\_\_\_\_  
month day year

Name \_\_\_\_\_ 

### Who Knows Me Best

If I need help, call these people.

Give this sheet to the nurse.

1st

Name	Phone	Address
_____	hm _____	
This person is my	wk _____	
_____	cell _____	

2nd

Name	Phone	Address
_____	hm _____	
This person is my	wk _____	
_____	cell _____	

3rd

Name	Phone	Address
_____	hm _____	
This person is my	wk _____	
_____	cell _____	





Name \_\_\_\_\_ 

Last updated:

\_\_\_\_\_ month day year

**Give this sheet to the nurse.**

## My Medications

I am taking these medications now. This list includes prescriptions from my doctor, over-the-counter medications, and natural products.

I am registered with the MedicAlert® Safely Home® program.

My ID number is \_\_\_\_\_.

My medical information can be accessed by calling Hotline 1-800-407-7717

Name of medication or natural product	How much I take Example: 2 pills, 1 teaspoon.	When I take it Examples: once a day, with lunch, at bedtime.	How I take it Example: swallow with water.

**More medications →**



**Tips to help me take my medications**

## More medications

Name of medication or natural product	How much I take Examples: 2 pills, 1 teaspoon.	When I take it Examples: once a day, with lunch, at bedtime.	How I take it Example: swallow with water.

### Important things to know about me:

I have special authorization for my dementia medications: (explain)

I do not tolerate the following medications:

I am sensitive to changes in my medications, so talk to my caregiver or my family doctor. This is what happens to me if my medications are changed:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ **Last updated:**\_\_\_\_\_  
month day year

## My Wishes

**Give this sheet  
to the nurse.****I want the hospital staff to know about my wishes if I cannot express them, or make decisions for myself.**

### Advance directive

I have an advance directive.  Yes  No

Where do I keep copies of my advance directive?

\_\_\_\_\_

Who makes decisions for me when I can't? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Who knows about my wishes?

These people know about my wishes:

**For help with advance planning visit:****[www.alzheimer.ca/en/Living-with-dementia/Planning-for-the-future](http://www.alzheimer.ca/en/Living-with-dementia/Planning-for-the-future)**



Name \_\_\_\_\_ 

## My Ready-to-Go Bag

Every year, many older adults go to the emergency department. In an emergency, everyone is in a hurry. It is easy to forget important things.

Are you an older adult or a caregiver? Plan ahead. Pack a ready-to-go bag for a future hospital visit. This should contain items needed by both the caregiver and older adult living with dementia.



Keep the bag handy—where you and ambulance attendants can find it easily.



### Waiting in the hospital

It is very busy in a hospital emergency department. Most patients have to wait in waiting rooms and in treatment rooms.



treatment room

Waiting is hard. Items in your bag can make a visit to emergency better.

**Checklist →**

## Items for the older adult with dementia

- set of clothes
  - underwear
  - socks
  - slippers
  - pants
  - shirt
- adult pull ups
  - Note:** A hospital will have adult briefs and pads, but it may not have pull ups.
- plastic bag to put wet clothes in
- tissues, wet wipes
- skin cream, lip balm
- snacks, bottled water, juice
  - Note:** At the hospital, always check with a nurse before you give food, water, or juice to the older adult.
- bedside clock with large numbers (with batteries, not electric)
- MedicAlert® Safely Home® bracelet
- other: \_\_\_\_\_



More →

## Items for the caregiver and family members

- snacks, bottled water, juice boxes
- list of people and their contact information who can come and help
- things to read or use while you wait
  - books, magazines, crosswords, games, cards
  - knitting
  - sketch book and pencils
- pad of paper to write down notes, questions, instructions
- money (change) for parking, vending machines, pay phones
- a copy of the older adult's advance directive
- health care card
- MedicAlert® Safely Home® ID number and Hotline number
- family physician contact information
- other:

## Items to give to nurses and doctors at the hospital

- older adult's advance directive, **My Wishes** tool, health benefit card, and family doctor's contact information.
- important information in these tools
  - About Me** tool
  - Who Knows Me Best** tool
  - My Medications** tool
- other:

## Name tags and notes

- Put name tags on the ready-to-go bag and other important items. For example, a walker or wheelchair.
- You may not be home when the older adult goes to the hospital. So post a note near the ready-to-go bag and beside entrance doors.

The note tells ambulance attendants or other caregivers to take the bag to the hospital.

**DO NOT BRING JEWELLERY** and other irreplaceable items of value.



### More tools

Other tools in this series include:

- ▶ **Be Ready for an Emergency Hospital Visit**
- ▶ **About Me**
- ▶ **Who Knows Me Best**
- ▶ **My Medications**
- ▶ **My Wishes**
- ▶ **Plan Ahead for Going Home**

### Where to get help and information

Active in communities right across Canada, the Alzheimer Society provides information, support and education to people living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, their families and caregivers.

Call 1-800-616-8816 (toll free) or go to:  
**[www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca)**



Name \_\_\_\_\_ 

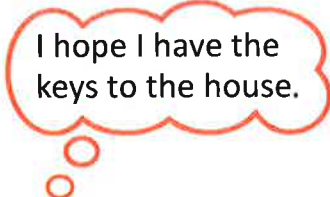
### Plan Ahead for Going Home

You will want to go back home after your visit to the emergency department. It might be late at night when you can go home. You might be tired.

The doctors and nurses might be very busy. They might not have time to give you detailed instructions or to answer all your questions.

What can make your trip home easier, faster and safer? You can plan ahead. You will need:

- ✓ information about your health problem
- ✓ transportation home and keys to your home
- ✓ health supplies and personal supplies



**Make sure hospital staff answer your questions before you go home.  
Make sure you have all of your personal items.**



**Checklist →**

# Checklist: Part 1

Here are some things to plan early in our hospital visit.

- How will we get home? By car, taxi, or ambulance?  
Will we need money for the bus or taxi? \_\_\_\_\_
- Do we have the keys to the house?  
If not, who can pick them up for us? \_\_\_\_\_
- What groceries will we need at home? \_\_\_\_\_  
Who can pick them up? \_\_\_\_\_
- What is the weather like? Do we need warm boots, coats,  
and gloves? Who can bring them to us? \_\_\_\_\_

Use this checklist just before you go home.

## Remember to take our personal items home

- ready-to-go bag and everything inside
- shoes, boots, slippers
- coats, hats, gloves, scarves
- cane, walker, wheelchair
- purse, wallet
- other:



More →

## Checklist: Part 2

Here are some questions to ask the doctors and nurses before we go home. We can write down the answers. Or the hospital staff can write down the answers for us.



- Ask about my medical problem.** Why am I sick?  
What caused my problem? What did the doctors find?

- Ask about medications.** Do I have any new medications?  
When and how do I take them? What are they for?  
Should I take my old medications too?

More →

**Ask about things to watch for.** What symptoms should we watch for at home? For example, a fever, cough, pain, swelling. What should we do if I get sicker?

**Ask for information sheets about my medical problem.** Do we have all the information sheets that we need?

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**Ask about prescriptions.** Do I have all my prescriptions?

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**Ask about my follow-up plan.** Do I need to make an appointment with my family physician? When?

**Ask about referrals.** Do I have a referral to a specialist?

**More →**

- Ask about new equipment and supplies, and referrals to community supports.** Will I need new supports at home? For example, a walker, wheelchair, dressing supplies, referral to home care.

- Talk to the nurses if you are worried about being safe at home.**

### **More tools**

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- ▶ **Be Ready for an Emergency Hospital Visit**
- ▶ **About Me**
- ▶ **Who Knows Me Best**
- ▶ **My Medications**
- ▶ **My Wishes**
- ▶ **My Ready-to-Go Bag**

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