

## Traveling & Cognitive Impairment

Vacations are a time for families to share new experiences, see interesting places, and rest & relax. If you are the caregiver of someone with Alzheimer's, it is important to consider the stage of the person's illness, and adaptations that can make the vacation relaxing and enjoyable for everyone. Consider these suggestions before you take your next vacation:

### Plan a manageable vacation.

- Adjust your expectations. If you are a caregiver, you will have many of the same responsibilities you have at home. In that sense, this will be a "working" vacation. If you're interested in rest and relaxation for yourself, you may want to consider taking time away with a friend and arranging respite care for the person in your home or at a local care facility.
- If you're unsure how the person will react to traveling, consider a shortened version of a long trip. If the patient reacts positively, you can return at a later time for a longer visit.
- Stay away from busy places, or from situations that may cause the person to feel over-stimulated, or anxious. Large amusement parks or busy cities might pose problems. Visiting a relative with a large family and a busy, bustling household, may not be a relaxing time.
- Keep your vacation simple. Avoid the temptation to plan a fast-paced sightseeing trip. Instead, plan a trip that involves as few changes as possible. Escorted tours can be enjoyable if you're with a group who understand your care giving responsibilities. Do not rush.
- Choose a "fail-safe" option. Pick a vacation package that allows you to leave early-without financial penalty. Advise airlines, hotels, or tour operators that you're traveling with a person who has memory impairment.
- **Never leave your loved one alone.** Make sure everyone has identification and emergency contact information. Register with the Safe Return program before you leave.
- Try to maintain daily routines such as eating schedules, and bedtimes. Use your own good judgment – no one knows your loved one better than you do. Have a great time!

### SUPPORT GROUP

Support Group for persons with Mild Cognitive Impairment, Early stages of Alzheimer's disease and Memory Loss and their families.

Next meeting:

**May 18th, 9:30 a.m.**

**Speaker: Lydia West, YMCA**

**Topic: Nutrition**

**Location: Senior Friendship Center-Center for Healthy Aging, 1900 Brother Geenen Way, Sarasota**

### THE MEMORY DISORDER CLINIC

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Sponsored by Sarasota Memorial Hospital and State of Florida Department of Elder Affairs

## **Keeping your Home Safe**

**Telephones.** A person with memory loss may not remember phone numbers or remember to hang up the telephone. This can be dangerous in an emergency. Big button phones or phones equipped with push button picture frames are readily available in most retail stores. These phones can be programmed with the phone numbers of family or friends for easy calling.

For those with hearing impairment, free specialized telephones can be loaned through the Deaf Service Center of Sarasota and Manatee County. These phones have the larger numbers and a volume controlled speaker system. Call 941-921-5447 for qualifying details.

**Home Temperature Regulators.** A person suffering with memory loss may not be able to judge temperature or react quickly enough to hot or cold to prevent accidents. Check your water heater and make sure the setting is not too high to prevent scalding. Individuals may also have difficulty using the thermostat. Programmable thermostats are available to pre set home temperatures. Thermostat guards keep the memory impaired person from trying to regulate temperatures themselves.

**Fire Prevention.** It is important to have smoke detectors in the home. Replacing batteries regularly, for example during time changes, will insure that they are working well. If you cannot afford a fire detector or need help obtaining one, check your local fire department for assistance.

**Monitors.** Home monitors are a wonderful way for caregivers to “keep an ear” on loved ones when in another room. Many are portable and run on batteries so they can be taken with you when traveling. These can be valuable especially when you and your loved one are faced with unfamiliar surroundings. They are available in most electronic or baby stores and are reasonably priced.

**Lighting.** It is important for the entire home to be well lit, so dark areas will not disorient a person with Alzheimer’s - especially at night. Some small night lights can remain plugged in since they have electronic light sensors that will automatically turn on when the sun goes down.

## **SafeReturn Program**

The Alzheimer’s Association Safe Return is a nationwide identification program for individuals with cognitive or memory impairment. People who register are placed in a national photo/information database. Safe Return provides assistance if the person becomes lost locally or far from home. Assistance is available 24 hours/day any where in the United States. Identification products for the memory impaired person and their caregiver include engraved identification bracelet, necklace or iron on clothing labels, key chain or wallet cards. For more information on this program contact your local Alzheimer’s Association at 365-8883.

## **What’s on your mind?**

**Q:** My father has been having noticeable trouble with memory and refuses to see a doctor, how can I get him help?

**A:** If your father has not been evaluated, it is important that some basic tests be completed to make sure that his memory troubles are not caused by something that is treatable. About 15% of memory problems are caused by something that can be “fixed”. If he recognizes his trouble, emphasize the possibility of making things better. You might try combining the visit with something he enjoys such as lunch at his favorite restaurant.

If you have a question that you would like to send in to be answered in the newsletter, please mail your questions to:

**Memory Disorder Clinic  
Sarasota Memorial Hospital  
1700 S. Tamiami Trail  
Sarasota, FL 34239**

## Hurricane Season

Since hurricane season begins in June, now is the time to start preparing for this year's upcoming storms. For those caring for someone with memory impairment listen carefully to the advice given during a storm.

If you are advised to evacuate, leave early and have a plan. Make arrangements with friends or family outside the affected area if possible. A shelter, even one that accommodates special needs – is not the best place for someone who is confused. If you have no alternative, contact your local Emergency Management office to pre-register for special needs designation.

If you are not in an evacuation area, stay put, and have necessary supplies on hand. It is best not to continually watch hurricane updates on the television as they can be confusing and frightening. Try a movie instead. Here is a list of hurricane supplies you should begin collecting.

**Water** - 1 gallon daily per person for 3 to 7 days

**Food** - enough for 3 to 7 days  
non-perishable packaged or canned food  
non-electric can opener  
cooking tools, fuel, matches, charcoal  
paper plates, plastic utensils

**Blankets & Pillows, Clothing** - seasonal rain gear, sturdy shoes

**Medications**, Prescription Drugs & over the counter medicine, **First Aid Kit**

**Toiletries**, Hand Sanitizer, Moisture wipes

**Flashlight, Radio** (Battery operated and NOAA weather radio)

**Batteries**

**Cash** (with some small bills) - Banks and ATMs may not be open or available for extended periods.

**Games:** Deck of cards, books or other activities to keep busy

**Important documents** - insurance, medical records, bank account numbers, Social Security card, Medicare and insurance cards, etc.

**Fuel** for your vehicles

## News Flash!

**The Johnnie Byrd Alzheimer's Research Institute is now accepting research candidates**

Please contact Lorelei Lindeanux-Balazs MA for details. 941-917-7197

### **New: On going Alzheimer's Association Educational Program**

**When:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Tues of each Month 2:00 to 3:00

**Location:** Sarasota Memorial Care Center at University Parkway 2<sup>nd</sup> floor- Conference room 5350 University Parkway in Sarasota.

(Corner of Honore and University Parkway)

**Call:** 941-365-8883 for information

### **Medicare Enrollment Event**

**When:** Monday May 8<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** 8:30 am to Noon.

**Location:** Waldemere Auditorium.

Reservations requested.

Call 941-917-7777 for information

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### **Free Memory Screenings**

The Memory Disorder Clinic offers free memory screenings at The Senior Friendship Centers on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of every month in Sarasota and on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of every month in Venice. Call (941) 917-7197 to schedule an appointment.

**Due to increased demand an additional screening location has been added.**

Location: 1921 Waldemere Street

When: Friday Afternoons by appointment only

Please call 917-7197 for details.

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### **Sarasota Memorial Hospital**

#### **Memory Disorder Clinic**

#### **Administrative Office Location**

1700 S. Tamiami Trail

Sarasota, FL 34239

(941) 917-7197

[www.sarasotageriatrics.com](http://www.sarasotageriatrics.com)

#### **Clinic Locations**

1921 Waldemere Street

Suite 403, Sarasota

929 S. Tamiami Trail

Suite 203. Osprey