

Tips for Safe Traveling

- **Consult Their Physician**

Before you leave, take time to talk with their physician. Make sure you understand their condition, any other chronic conditions they may have, and ask the doctor for any advice in making your trip smooth.

- **Itinerary & Travel Documents**

Outline your entire trip in an itinerary that is as detailed as possible. Make notes of all your flight numbers, hotel plans, travel times, important medications, etc. Give a copy to your emergency contacts and keep a copy on you at all times. Also, be sure to carry important documents like emergency contact info, allergies, medical conditions, physician contacts, and copies of personal identification documents. Have your loved one wear an ID bracelet while traveling and place emergency contacts in their wallet.

- **Snap a Photo**

Each morning after they're dressed, snap a photo of them on your cell phone or digital camera so that you can easily look back or share what they were wearing that day. You will always be able to provide a current and updated description in an emergency situation.

- **Maintain Familiarity and Routine**

Those with dementia often struggle with adapting to a new environment, so try to bring familiar items from home (i.e. pillows, blankets, photos, etc). Do what you can to help them maintain their routine as much as possible (i.e. shower in the evening vs. morning, reading the paper after they eat, always watches tv before bed).

- **Watch Travel Times**

Try to keep your driving or flight time to 5 hrs or less. If you're going to be traveling 5 hrs or more, try to travel with more than one caregiver. Have activities, games, or photos ready to keep their mind busy and calm. Also, leave at the best time for your loved one. If they're not a morning person, consider an afternoon or an evening departure. Consider whether your loved one is affected by sundowning.

- **Be Realistic & Patient**

If your loved one is in the later stages of dementia, or exhibits delusional or aggressive behavior, be realistic about travel plans and whether or not it's safe to travel with them. If you feel it's safe to travel, exercise patience in all aspects. Allow them extra time to adjust to new settings, get comfortable in the car or plane, or warm up to a new location or routine.

