

MDS Alert

Tools: Tips for Managing Dementia Without Drugs

Follow these suggestions from the Alzheimer's Association.

"Steps to developing successful non-drug treatments include:

- Recognizing that the person is not just "acting mean or ornery," but is having further symptoms of the disease
- Identifying the cause and how the symptom may relate to the experience of the person with Alzheimer's
- Changing the environment to resolve challenges and obstacles to comfort, security and ease of mind

Coping tips

- Monitor personal comfort. Check for pain, hunger, thirst, constipation, full bladder, fatigue, infections and skin irritation. Maintain a comfortable room temperature.
- Avoid being confrontational or arguing about facts. For example, if a person expresses a wish to go visit a parent who died years ago, don't point out that the parent is dead. Instead, say, "Your mother is a wonderful person. I would like to see her too."
- Redirect the person's attention. Try to remain flexible, patient and supportive by responding to the emotion, not the behavior.
- Create a calm environment. Avoid noise, glare, insecure space and too much background distraction, including television.
- Allow adequate rest between stimulating events.
- Provide a security object.
- Acknowledge requests, and respond to them.
- Look for reasons behind each behavior. Consult a physician to identify any causes related to medications or illness.
- Explore various solutions.
- Don't take the behavior personally, and share your experiences with others."

Source: www.alz.org/alzheimers_disease_treatments_for_behavior.asp#non-drug