



Photo via [Pixabay](#)

## Live-In Help for Your Loved One with Alzheimer's

Alzheimer's disease is a thief that steals memory and the ability to perform even the simplest of daily tasks. Relatives and lifelong friends may become unrecognizable, and innocuous household objects may pose serious physical threats.

Recognizing the signs of Alzheimer's can be very difficult and easy to overlook or dismiss. Uncharacteristic behavior like forgetting to pay a bill or leaving a stove burner on can easily be passed off as an unfortunate part of the aging process. Recognized or not, the signs will progressively worsen, and leaving the individual alone will become too dangerous.

Use this guide, by the [Village of Bergen](#), to help you evaluate if your loved one needs help.

### **The signs**

[Getting lost](#) in a familiar area may be one of the first signs of Alzheimer's. It can also be a lethal danger as the disease sets in. If a loved one starts forgetting names and misses appointments, it can indicate gradual and disruptive memory loss, a classic sign of Alzheimer's. Forgetting how

to operate a microwave or a phone may reflect a decline in [cognitive functioning](#), which makes it difficult for the individual to perform rudimentary tasks. Confusion about what day or time it is also is a typical sign of Alzheimer's, as is a sudden difficulty recalling common words or phrases.

It may be useful to equip your loved one with a kind of [location tracker](#). These types of trackers typically use GPS or cellular signals to determine a given position. You can use these devices to keep a close eye on your loved one's location and quickly find them should they become disoriented.

## **Training**

These are just some of the signs that a problem exists and that your loved one needs constant care. The onset of dementia means your loved one's living environment is no longer stable, and that it's time to have someone stay with him or her every day.

If family members are going to take on the responsibility, it's important they get [training](#) and as much education as possible to prepare for difficult behaviors, learn how to communicate with the care subject, and maintain a safe care environment. Studies have shown that caregivers experience less stress once they've acquired skills through training. Joining a support group also helps caregivers cope with new challenges as they arise.

## **Self-care**

Training helps caregivers learn how to [take care of themselves](#) by recognizing the signs of mental and emotional fatigue. Doing something about it means getting enough exercise, eating well, and getting at least seven hours of sleep every night.

Think of it as an investment in your health and in the well-being of the loved one in your care, since it's not possible to be an effective caregiver if you can't take care of yourself. Getting enough rest and some time to yourself means finding another person to help share the burden when you need some relief. Ask a friend or family member to help pick up medications, make dinner, or stand in for you once in a while.

## **Modifications**

Dementia and disorientation puts Alzheimer's patients at considerable risk for accidents. One of the most important things you can do as a caregiver is to ensure that your loved one's home environment is as safe as possible. Many modifications can be made without hiring a contractor; some are as simple as writing down vital information, such as doctor and emergency medical numbers. Make sure that any [door locks](#) are disabled so that there's no risk of getting locked out or in. Razor blades and medications should always be locked away, and tripping hazards, such as electrical cords, stools, or small tables, should be put away.

Falls, one of the most common accidents associated with Alzheimer's, can be avoided by blocking off stairways and making sure the basement door stays locked. Keep your loved one's bedroom and bathroom on the first floor so there's no need to climb stairs (keep night lights in both rooms). If there are stairs leading to the front door, you'll need to have a ramp installed.

Paying for these kinds of upgrades to your home can be challenging. Your family may be eligible for a [home improvement grant](#). Many families may resort to [cashing out home equity](#) to fund the upgrade projects. Though these home improvements can be expensive, they are worth it for your loved one's well-being.

Alzheimer's patients can enjoy a rewarding and enjoyable life given attentive and loving care. Though some patients require [professional, long-term care](#), you can be an excellent caregiver in many circumstances. As a caregiver, it's important to remember that you are a very important part of the equation and need to take good care of yourself. Training, emotional support, and help from family can make it possible for you to maintain a successful care relationship.

*This article is brought to you by the [Village of Bergen](#), a short drive from Rochester and Batavia, has a strong connection with its past, a clear eye toward its future and a deep sense of place. With its many Victorian homes, historic downtown, and sidewalks canopied by old-growth trees, people choose Bergen because they want the kind of life and values that characterize America's small towns. For more information, please visit our website today!*