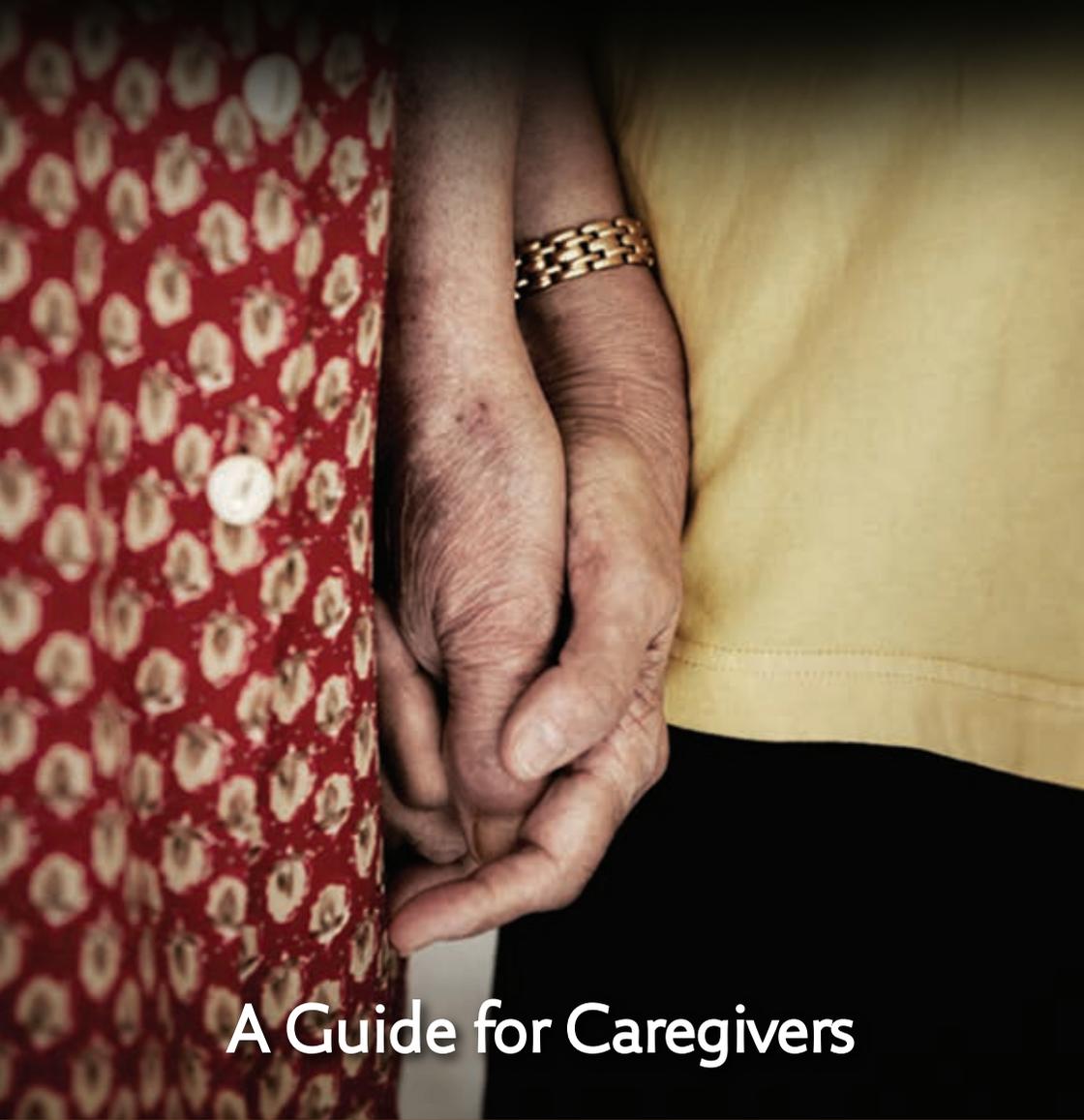


# *Safety at Home*

for People with Dementia



A Guide for Caregivers

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The information in this booklet is meant to serve as a guide and is not a substitute for professional medical advice. Please consult your Occupational Therapist if you require further clarification.

## What is Dementia?



- Dementia is a general term for the loss of memory and other intellectual abilities serious enough to interfere with daily life.
- This is not a natural ageing process but is always due to a disease.
- Forgetfulness is usually the most prominent symptom although the abilities to reason and judge are often impaired as well.
- People with dementia may not be able to think well enough to do normal activities, such as driving and cooking.

## What happens when a person has dementia?



### 1. Mild Stage:

- Self-care capacity and social skills generally remain intact.

### 2. Moderate Stage:

- There is difficulty using household appliances and telling time though capacity for self-care is generally retained.

### 3. Advanced Stage:

- Loses capacity for self-care and becomes completely dependent on the caregiver for basic daily living activities such as eating, dressing, toileting and bathing.

## Why does safety at home matters in caring for people with dementia?



1. People with dementia may have impaired judgment, especially for more advanced stages of dementia.
2. Ensuring that the home environment is uncluttered will eliminate tripping hazards.
3. By creating a supportive home environment, it allows them to adapt easily to their surroundings and encourage activities at home.



## At the Entrance



- If kerb is present, use contrasting colour strips at the edge of the kerb to make the kerb more visible. This helps to prevent tripping over the kerb.



- Lock the door and gate to keep your loved ones with dementia from wandering outdoors.

✓ Wandering may be present in people with moderate or advanced dementia, thus steps need to be taken to prevent them from wandering outdoors.

## Living Room



- Allow adequate space between the coffee table and sofa for better accessibility.
- Avoid sitting on low chair as it is harder to stand up from a low seat height.



- ✓ It is important to keep the home environment uncluttered to reduce confusion and agitation in people with dementia.

## Living Room



- Place important items such as pill box or alarm clock in the same location that is easily seen, such as a shelf on the wall.



- Coil up wires or place them neatly near the walls.



- ✓ People with dementia may have difficulties in distinguishing colour contrasts.

## Kitchen



- Sharp objects should be kept in designated drawer. Lock the drawer if possible to do so.



- Store toxic materials such as bleach and detergents away from food items.

✓ People with dementia may forget how to use or recognise common home appliances. Even the most basic home appliance can become dangerous for them.

✓ They may not be able to distinguish between food items and toxic materials like detergent.

## Kitchen



- Check and dispose of expired food regularly.



- Do not use non-microwavable items with the microwave. Turn off the switch when not in use.



- ✓ People with dementia may not be able to distinguish between fresh and rotten food.
- ✓ They may forget to turn off the tap, light switches or the gas stove.

## Laundry



- Label washed and unwashed clothes so that your loved ones will not get confused.
- Remove clutters such as pails, bamboo poles or mops.



- ✓ The use of washing machine can be simplified so that people with dementia can use it safely and maintain their independence.

## Toilet



- Avoid loose rugs and if needed, replace it with a non slip rug.



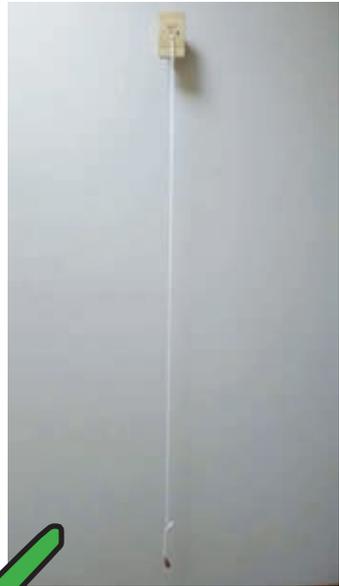
- Install grab rail to assist standing from a sitting position.

- ✓ The purpose of home modification of the toilet is to maintain independent personal care and to prevent falls.
- ✓ By respecting their privacy, they will feel safe and secure in the home environment.

## Toilet



- Ensure that the cord of the alarm system is not tied up.
- Position the toilet roll holder at an easily reached location when seated on the toilet seat.



- ✓ The toilet is one of the most common place in which falls happened at home.
- ✓ For people with dementia, self-care may be impaired and caregivers often face difficulties in bathing them.

## Bedroom



- Install nightlight at the bedside for better vision or ensure adequate lighting at night.



- Place important items such as keys and eye glasses on the side table by the bedside.



- ✓ Falls risk may be reduced in people with dementia if we provide a well-lit environment during the day and night, as they may not have the insight to look for light switches.

## Bedroom

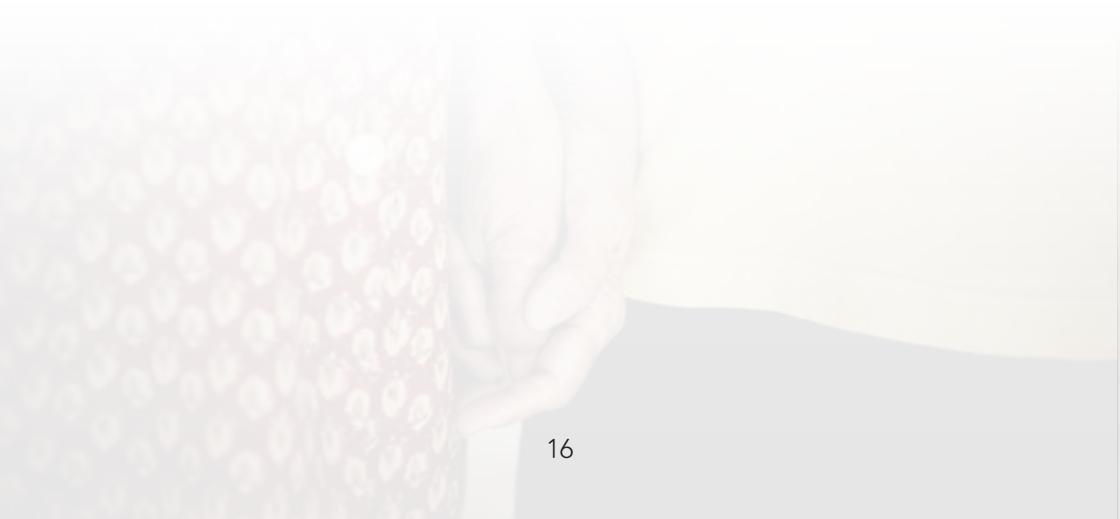


- Place a commode at the bedside to avoid unnecessary walking at night time and to reduce the risk of falls.



- ✓ Involuntary leakage of urine is common in people with dementia who are in the advanced stage.

# Notes



# Notes



## Notes



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