



## MAINTAINING A SAFE, ALZHEIMER-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

The home is an important place for a person with Alzheimer's disease. It helps her connect with the past and maintain a sense of who she is. However, some practical changes may need to be made to keep the home "Alzheimer-friendly."

When modifying your home environment, it is important to keep a familiar environment. Too many restrictions can make it difficult for the person to take part in daily activities, and can seriously affect her self-esteem.

Adapt the task to the person's current abilities. For example, a person who enjoyed wood-working may no longer be able to use power tools but may still be able to nail, sand and paint in the workroom. Take a few minutes to complete the following checklist on home safety. Keep in mind that as the disease progresses, you may need to update your responses.

### Home safety checklist

|                                                                                                                          | Yes | No |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| Do I need to store the scatter rugs and secure the carpet to prevent falls?                                              |     |    |
| Are the stairways safe for the person I am caring for?                                                                   |     |    |
| Is the person with Alzheimer's disease able to use the electrical appliances in the kitchen and bathroom safely?         |     |    |
| Should the hot water heater temperature be lowered?                                                                      |     |    |
| Are there any medications, cleaning substances or gardening chemicals that should be locked away?                        |     |    |
| Do I need to be there when the person with Alzheimer's disease has a cigarette or should I hide the lighter and matches? |     |    |
| Should I lock some of the doors or do I need to change the placing of the locks on the doors?                            |     |    |
| Should I consider getting some safety equipment into the bathroom (i.e., grab-bars, elevated toilet seat, non-slip mat)? |     |    |
| Is the lighting good enough to get rid of shadows that may cause confusion?                                              |     |    |
| Are there items that confuse the person with Alzheimer's disease (i.e., pictures/mirrors)?                               |     |    |

### Resources:

The Alzheimer Journey, Module 2: On the Road.