



# Social Isolation



A dementia diagnosis does not mean an end to socialization. In fact, socialization is needed more than ever. Studies show that loneliness and isolation contribute to the progression of dementia. You can help make social arrangements on behalf of your loved one in order to prevent social isolation.

## Plan ahead:

- Check in with friends and family
- Set a time to speak privately to the friend or family member.
- Let them know they have been chosen because of their close relationship to your loved one.
- If you don't want to share too much, consider saying, "As (family member) is getting older, they need a little more help planning their activities."

## Create structure:

- No matter the extent that you're involved, the key is that the arrangement feels authentic and comfortable for your loved one.
- Give the family member or friend a few ideas of dementia-friendly activities.

## Understand necessary accommodations:

- People with cognitive impairment can easily become overstimulated, which can lead to agitation and stress.
- Consider a visit at home and bring flowers or a favorite snack.
- Choose a place that is familiar, relatively quiet and at a time of day that is less busy.
- Going for a walk, if the loved one is able, can offer a nice change of scenery and some exercise.
- If the word "dementia" is upsetting to your loved one, tell the visitor to avoid using the word.
- Suggest some conversation starters about pleasant or interesting topics.
- The visitor can bring a magazine with an interesting article to discuss, or a photo of a mutual friend and some good news about how they're doing.

## Augment visits with other activities:

- Investigate local senior centers or clubs, where people meet for exercise, crafts or socializing. Often such centers offer social and health-related activities as well as transportation options.
- Check out our Memory Cafe events: [www.seniorsathome.jfcs.org/memory-cafe/](http://www.seniorsathome.jfcs.org/memory-cafe/)

## Seek advice:

Always remember that you have the Seniors At Home team to support you—just ask!

**To schedule a dementia care consultation email [dementiacare@jfcs.org](mailto:dementiacare@jfcs.org) or call 415-449-3712**

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