

How to Handle Repeated Questions in Dementia: A Guide for Patients & Families

People living with dementia often repeat the same questions many times. This happens because the brain has difficulty storing new information. The person may forget that they already asked the question or that it was already answered. Repeated questions are usually not intentional and can be frustrating for caregivers. Understanding why this happens and learning simple strategies can help caregivers respond with patience and reduce stress.

Why Repeated Questions Happen

- Difficulty forming new memories
- Anxiety or uncertainty about what is happening
- Seeking reassurance or comfort
- Changes in daily routine
- Difficulty understanding or remembering explanations

Common Examples

- “What time are we leaving?”
- “Where is my spouse?”
- “When are we going home?”
- “Did I take my medication?”
- “What day is it?”

Helpful Ways to Respond

Stay Calm and Patient

- Remember the person is not repeating the question on purpose
- Try to respond with a calm tone
- Avoid showing frustration when possible

Provide Reassurance

- Sometimes the person is looking for comfort rather than information
- Gentle reassurance can reduce anxiety

Use Simple Answers

- Give short, clear responses
- Avoid long explanations that may be difficult to remember

Use Visual Reminders

- Write the answer on a whiteboard or note
- Use calendars or reminder cards
- Label important items or rooms

Redirect Attention

- Gently change the subject
- Suggest a simple activity
- Engage the person in conversation or a task

When Repeated Questions Increase

Repeated questions may increase when a person is:

- Tired
- Anxious or stressed
- In a noisy or confusing environment
- Experiencing changes in routine
- Feeling unwell or uncomfortable

Tips for Caregivers

- Maintain consistent daily routines
- Use visual reminders when possible
- Encourage calm environments
- Take breaks when caregiving becomes overwhelming
- Ask for help from family members or support services when needed

National Organizations & Resources

✓ Alzheimer's Association

☎ 800-272-3900 | 🌐 alz.org

✓ National Institute on Aging

🌐 nia.nih.gov

✓ Family Caregiver Alliance

🌐 caregiver.org

✓ Eldercare Locator

☎ 1-800-677-1116 | 🌐 eldercare.acl.gov

Final Notes

- Repeated questions are a common symptom of memory loss in dementia.
- Responding with patience and reassurance can help reduce distress.
- Caregivers should remember that seeking support and taking breaks are important parts of providing sustainable care.