

## Home Safety Guide

### Keeping a Loved One with Dementia Safe at Home

Caring for someone with dementia at home is an act of love. Thoughtful environmental adjustments can significantly reduce risk while preserving dignity and independence. This guide outlines practical, physician-recommended safety strategies to help families create a secure and supportive home environment.

#### Fall Prevention (Most Common Home Risk)

- Remove loose rugs or secure with non-slip backing.
- Keep walkways clear of cords and clutter.
- Install grab bars in bathrooms (not towel racks).
- Use non-slip shower and tub mats.
- Ensure bright, even lighting; add hallway night lights.
- Install handrails on both sides of stairways.
- Encourage use of supportive, non-skid footwear.

#### Kitchen & Fire Safety

- Install stove knob covers or automatic shut-off devices.
- Secure sharp utensils if judgment is impaired.
- Keep matches and lighters locked away.
- Test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors monthly.
- Keep a fire extinguisher accessible.
- Supervise meal preparation if safety declines.

#### Wandering Prevention

- Install door alarms or motion sensors.
- Place locks higher or lower than typical sightline.
- Use a medical ID bracelet.
- Consider GPS tracking technology.
- Place visual STOP signs on exit doors.
- Keep a recent photograph available for emergencies.

#### Medication Safety

- Store medications in a locked container.
- Use a weekly pill organizer.
- Dispose of outdated prescriptions.
- Maintain an updated medication list.
- Supervise administration when memory is impaired.

#### Bathroom & Bedroom Safety

- Set water heater below 120°F to prevent burns.
- Use shower chairs for balance support.
- Remove interior bathroom locks.
- Keep bedside lighting within reach.
- Avoid electric blankets in advanced cognitive impairment.

#### Reducing Confusion & Agitation

- Maintain a calm, uncluttered environment.
- Keep a consistent daily routine.
- Use large clocks and calendars.
- Label drawers or rooms if helpful.
- Minimize mirrors if they cause distress.

#### Emergency Preparedness

- Post emergency numbers clearly.
- Keep advance directives accessible.
- Inform trusted neighbors of the situation.
- Consider a medical alert system.

#### Driving Safety

- Remove/Sell Car if possible
- Remove/Secure Car Keys
- Remove battery from key fob
- Disconnect Battery from car

Home safety should be reassessed periodically as dementia progresses. The goal is not to remove independence, but to thoughtfully support safety, comfort, and quality of life.