UK Care Guide

LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

51 TIPS TO HELP

YOU WITH DAILY LIVING

THIS INFOGRAPHIC PROVIDES HELPFUL ADVICE ON THE FOLLOWING 8 TOPICS

TOPIC 1 MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

TOPIC 2 KEEPING FIT, HEALTHY AND WELL

TOPIC 3 IN THE HOME

TOPIC 4 OUT AND ABOUT

TOPIC 5 LEGAL MATTERS YOU SHOULD CONSIDER

TOPIC 6 FINANCIAL MATTERS YOU SHOULD CONSIDER

TOPIC 7 CARE AND SUPPORT

TOPIC 8 ADVICE FOR CARERS, FAMILY AND FRIENDS

TOPIC 1

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Positive mental health and wellbeing is essential for individuals with Dementia. Due to the nature of the condition, it's naturally very important to look after mental health. Doing so can alleviate the symptoms of Dementia and help you to live better with it – as well as reducing the possibility of further illness.

TIP 1

GET ORGANISED WITH A ROUTINE, CALENDAR AND VISUAL AIDS

A simple to follow yet firm daily and weekly routine can be really helpful. This could include set mealtimes, time for a walk and a few hours allocated to your favourite hobby.

TIP 2

TRY COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES AND DEMENTIA MANAGEMENT

Good brain health and physical wellbeing go hand in hand – so it's really important that you look after yourself and stay active. The benefits of exercise and a healthy lifestyle are numerous and far-reaching – for your physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.

TIP 3

ACCESS COUNSELLING AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Speak to someone impartial in a private setting or as part of a support group or a person trained to understand your concerns.

TIP 4

DON'T GIVE UP YOUR DAILY ACTIVITIES – SEEK MORE!

Keep up any hobbies or daily activities you enjoy as much as possible – and actively seek others to keep your mind and body healthy and fit.

TIP 5

MAINTAIN SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND MEET WITH FRIENDS

A diagnosis of Dementia doesn't mean you have to hide away in the house all day. The more you continue to interact with others that better you will feel.

TIP 6

KEEP TALKING

Communication is really important – and an open dialogue is essential to ensure that you feel understood by and connected with others.

TIP 7

DON'T WORRY ABOUT EXPLAINING YOURSELF TO OTHERS

Communication and socialisation are important, When you share with others, you can communicate more easily and openly, and enable them to understand you and help you.

TIP 8

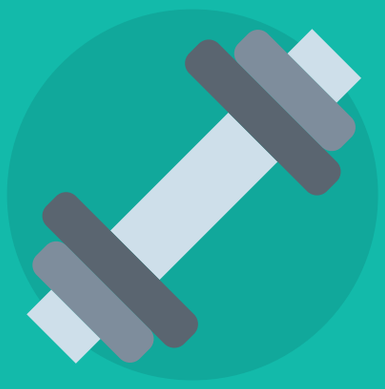
KEEP YOUR MEMORY WITH BRAIN-SHARPENING EXERCISES AND ACTIVITIES

Clubs, groups and physical activities not only help to sharpen the brain, they provide a sense of purpose and an opportunity to socialise, reducing isolation. This in turn lessens the anxiety, irritability, confusion and distress Dementia can bring.

TOPIC 2

KEEPING FIT, HEALTHY AND WELL

Good brain health and physical wellbeing go hand in hand – so it's really important that you look after yourself and stay active. The benefits of exercise and a healthy lifestyle are numerous and far-reaching – both for your physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.



TIP 9

EXERCISE AND MENTAL STIMULATION

Regular exercise is really important for physical health and mental wellbeing. The activity you choose doesn't have to be strenuous – just getting out and moving in the fresh air is beneficial.

TIP 10

EAT WELL AND DRINK PLENTY OF WATER

Eating a nutritious, balanced diet can greatly improve your overall sense of health and wellbeing. Drink plenty of water, and keep consumption of diuretics and sugary drinks like coffee, fizzy pop, alcohol and juices to a minimum.

TIP 11

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOUR DOCTOR AND HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

Keep the dialogue open with your doctor or specialist, and ask them about regular check-ups to ensure that your course of treatment is still right for you.

TIP 12

KEEP OTHER HEALTH AND MOBILITY ISSUES IN CHECK

Keep an eye on your overall health. Although with a diagnosis of Dementia the focus often falls on mental wellbeing.

TIP 13

ASK ABOUT OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

Occupational therapy is another great option for individuals with Dementia. You can ask to be referred to an occupational therapist by your doctor or specialist.

TOPIC 3

IN THE HOME

Living at home (especially alone) can become challenging. Even in the early stages of the condition, forgetfulness and confusion can pose a risk to safety. Despite this, understandably many sufferers wish to remain in their own home and familiar surroundings for as long as possible.

TIP 14

INVEST IN DEMENTIA AIDS TO HELP YOU TO LIVE SAFELY AT HOME

A list of things to do before bed (kept in a prominent place) is a helpful safety tool, as this reminds you to carry out essential tasks such as turning on the oven or gas fire, or locking the front and back doors.

TIP 15

ENSURE EASY COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILY, FRIENDS AND CARERS

Whether you are living alone or with a spouse, relative or friend, you will need to be easy to get hold of, and you should be able to contact loved ones easily.

TIP 16

CONSIDER CARE AT HOME OR COMPANIONSHIP

If you're unable to schedule regular time with family, friends and carers, companionship or care in the home is a great option.

TIP 17

REDUCE VULNERABILITY WITH ADDITIONAL SECURITY MEASURES

Call Minders can be placed upon your account (usually by your telephone provider – although other companies can also do this for you).

TIP 18

LABEL CUPBOARDS AND HOUSEHOLD ITEMS USING COLOUR CODING

Clearly labelling the things you use the most in the house (such as your cereal cupboard, fridge, TV remote and telephone) can help to trigger your memory if you are feeling confused.

TIP 19

PRE-ARRANGE YOUR MEALS

Keep snacks handy so that you know you're eating regularly – and can quickly grab something if you don't feel up to making a meal from scratch.

TIP 20

KEEP EVERYDAY ESSENTIALS HANDY

To avoid misplacing things or forgetting their locations, it's a good idea to keep all essential items in a prominent, easy to see, easy to reach place. Glasses, house keys, telephones and money – anything you use on a daily basis should be kept here.

TIP 21

MAKE SURE YOUR MEDICATION IS ORGANISED AND READILY AVAILABLE

Ask to pharmacist about pillboxes and organisers – these include the dates and times for each set of medication to remind you.

TOPIC 4

OUT AND ABOUT

Understandably, heading out (even to familiar places) can pose a safety risk as a result of common symptoms of Dementia, such as confusion and disorientation. In this graphic we set out how it's still possible for you to enjoy getting out and about – without anxiety or safety issues.

TIP 22

ALWAYS LET FRIENDS, RELATIVES OR CARERS KNOW WHERE YOU ARE

It's really important to let somebody know when you are going out and where you are going in case you become confused and forget where you are, or are unable to get back home.

TIP 23

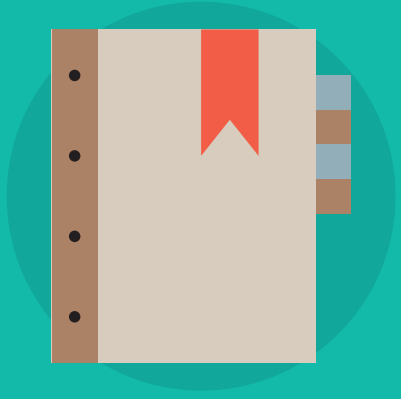
INVEST IN A PERSONAL ALARM AND OTHER USEFUL GADGETS

A personal alarm or medical alarm in pendant form can be useful for people in the more progressive stages of Dementia. This is small handy device you can keep around your neck or on your person.

TIP 24

ALWAYS KEEP A PHONE HANDY

Always keep a mobile phone on your person – with the numbers of your family and friends saved so that you can easily call them without having to remember their contact details.



TIP 25

KEEP YOUR DETAILS AND PHONE NUMBERS OF CARERS AND RELATIVES

In addition to a phone with numbers stored in it, keeping a card in your purse or wallet with your details and those of your relatives is essential. Make sure you include your full name and any medical conditions you have, and several emergency contacts.

TOPIC 5

LEGAL MATTERS YOU SHOULD CONSIDER

Although legal matters are an unpleasant and unwanted aspect of serious illness in later life, they do need to be considered carefully – as soon as possible. The earlier legal matters are dealt with, the more time can be spent coming to terms with a diagnosis of Dementia, and putting necessary measures in place to protect your wellbeing, dignity and personal wishes.

TIP 26

CONSIDER LASTING POWER OF ATTORNEY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

Lasting Power of Attorney is a type of legal document which enables a nominated person to take care of financial or personal affairs on your behalf should you lose mental capacity.

TIP 27

ENSURE THAT YOU HAVE MADE A WILL

It is very important for anyone to make a will. Without a Will, you can't decide what happens to your financial assets when you are gone – and the government will allocate your funds accordingly.

TIP 28

ESTATE PLANNING

Plan ahead with what you want to do with your assets when you do die. Preparing for this is called Estate Planning, and this is all about ensuring your financial affairs are in order from a legal perspective.

TIP 29

CONSIDER DRAWING UP AN 'ADVANCE DECISION'

It ensures that you will be able to have access to the treatment you want when you no longer have the mental capacity to make decisions regarding your care. It's unpleasant to think of death and future mental incapacity or illness, but considering how you will be looked after now will ensure that your wishes are carried out.

TOPIC 6

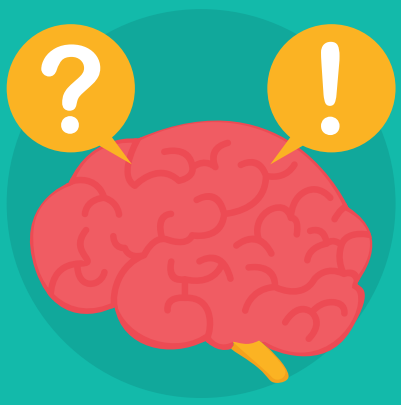
FINANCIAL MATTERS YOU SHOULD CONSIDER

Complex or difficult financial matters are an unfortunate downside of illnesses like Dementia and indeed later life itself – but with information, support and forward planning financial aspects can be taken care of appropriately now for the future.

TIP 30

CONSIDER CARE COSTS AND MAKE ARRANGEMENTS ACCORDINGLY

You may need to reconsider or alter your financial plans to accommodate the future cost of care. This could include adjusting your Will, or thinking about arranging your assets so that you can release equity in your home at a later date, or sell property in order to pay for care.



TIP 31

THINK ABOUT YOUR WILL AND INHERITANCE

From a financial perspective this is the only way you can be sure that your remaining assets are divided in line with your wishes when you pass away. If you need to access care now or in the future, it may affect the amount of money and the type of assets you can leave in your will for family and friends.

TIP 32

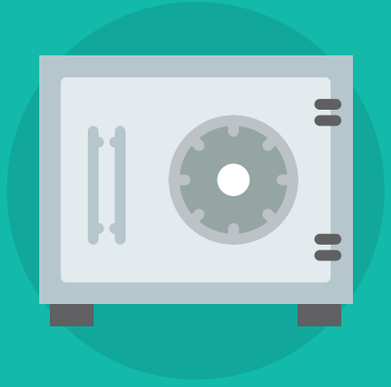
SET ASIDE MONEY FOR EVERYDAY LIVING AND ENJOYMENT

Factor in a daily or weekly budget to suit your needs, remembering to include vital elements such as food, medicines and any direct debits you have.

TIP 33

ENSURE THAT YOU HAVE ACCESS TO ALL THE BENEFITS AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT YOU ARE ENTITLED TO

You may be eligible for benefits either as a result of your diagnosis of Dementia, other illnesses or financial factors – so it's important to explore this in detail and review your situation every now and again to ensure you're getting everything you're entitled to.



TIP 34

ARRANGE BANK ACCOUNTS, INSURANCE, FINANCIAL ASSETS AND INVESTMENTS

Make a list including all assets and financial elements – from insurance policies, trusts and shares to property and savings accounts. You may like to keep things the way they are – or perhaps you'll find peace of mind in consolidating or rearranging your current state of affairs.

TIP 35

SHORT-TERM SOLUTIONS CAN BE HELPFUL

Setting up Direct Debits or standing orders for bills you normally pay manually on a regular basis can ensure that you don't miss a payment, or need to remember when they come in.

TIP 36

CONSIDER PUTTING MONEY INTO A TRUST

If you're keen to leave behind some money for your loved ones, or wish to hand over control of your finances to a trusted relative to take care of for you, a trust may be a suitable option.

TOPIC 7

CARE AND SUPPORT

It is often necessary for individuals to access professional care. Depending on the situation this can be administered at home,

or in a specialist centre or residential facility designed specifically for individuals with Dementia.

TIP 37

GATHER INFORMATION TO DECIDE WHICH TYPE OF CARE IS RIGHT FOR YOU

The type of care you need will largely depend on your situation and current condition. Individuals with Dementia can often access care at home first, either on a regular weekly or daily basis, or administered by a live-in carer.

TIP 38

BUDGET FOR CARE

When considering how much you have to spend, you should take into account all your assets – including savings, shares and property. Then think about the type of care you wish to receive now and in the future – and how long you expect to require care provision for.

TIP 39

RESEARCH CARE HOMES AND AGENCIES CAREFULLY AND THOROUGHLY BEFORE MAKING A SHORTLIST

The best course of action is to make a shortlist of your favoured agencies or homes. Then you can investigate each further. It's essential to visit residential establishments – without an appointment, if possible. This enables you to obtain an accurate impression of the care they give.

TIP 40

ALWAYS ASK FOR GENUINE REVIEWS AND TESTIMONIALS

Reviews and testimonials are the best way to determine whether the company you have chosen or shortlisted offers a good standard of care. The best type of endorsements are those delivered via word of mouth, but if you are finding these hard to come by, you can go online to search for genuine recommendations.

TIP 41

BEAR IN MIND THAT THINGS MAY CHANGE IN THE FUTURE

It's worth bearing in mind that the type of care you choose now may not suit your needs later down the line as your condition progresses.

TIP 42

CONSIDER BOTH SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM CARE SOLUTIONS

Be sure not to put pressure on yourself, and think about interim care to help give you the time you need to make a sound decision.

TOPIC 8

ADVICE FOR CARERS, FAMILY AND FRIENDS

This part of the graphic is dedicated to those supporting relatives or friends with Dementia – the tips you'll find here should help you to care for and support your loved one.

TIP 43

CONTACT LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO ENSURE THAT YOU HAVE ACCESS TO THE SUPPORT YOU NEED

Every local authority offers a different range of support – but all areas should provide resources for people with Dementia and their families.

TIP 44

ENSURE THAT YOUR RELATIVE IS GETTING ALL THE FINANCIAL AND MEDICAL SUPPORT THEY'RE ENTITLED TO

If you have legal and financial decisions in place, you may need to speak to agencies and medical professionals on your relative's behalf to ensure that they are receiving the support they are entitled to.

TIP 45

APPLY FOR CARER'S ALLOWANCE AND OTHER BENEFITS

This financial support can help you to cover some of the costs of looking after a relative, such as petrol, shopping and giving up work or going part time.

TIP 46

ENSURE THAT FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED

There may be specific funeral arrangements that are needed when the time comes. Never an easy topic to discuss but one which should be raised sensitively.

TIP 47

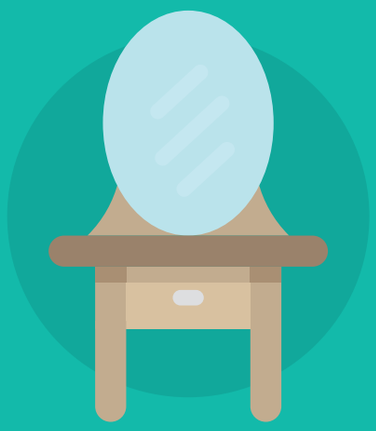
LEARN AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE ABOUT DEMENTIA AND HOW TO DEAL WITH IT

You'll need to gather as much information as you can in order to understand how you need to communicate with and care for your loved one. Visit **www.ukcareguide.co.uk** for more information.

TIP 48

MAKE SURE YOU'RE PREPARED AND WILLING TO ADMINISTER CARE, AND MAKE PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

You'll need to consider other commitments (such as work and family) and think about whether you are able to care for your relative both now and in the future as their condition progresses.



TIP 49

TAKE SOME TIME TO LOOK AFTER YOURSELF

Although it may feel difficult to find the time to set aside just for you, caring for your own mental wellbeing will help you to provide better support for your friend or relative.

TIP 50

DON'T BE ASHAMED TO ASK FOR HELP

This is important as it not only gives you a welcome break, but it preserves the familial relationship you have with your relative. This can sometimes be broken down as you become the 'carer' alone – additional care support enables you to spend quality time together.

TIP 51

ACCESS COUNSELLING OR ATTEND SUPPORT GROUPS

It can be difficult to express feelings of anger, frustration, guilt or exhaustion – especially to family members and to the person you are caring for.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ANY OF THE TOPICS ABOVE, PLEASE VISIT US AT

WWW.UKCAREGUIDE.CO.UK **OR EMAIL** **HELLO@UKCAREGUIDE.CO.UK**

PLEASE SHARE THIS INFOGRAPHIC AND HELP OTHERS WITH DEMENTIA