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Advice From An Alzheimer's Patient

By: Jeanne Capp /

An Early Stage Alzheimer's patient
Member of the Early Stage Alzheimer's Support
Group in Marlborough, NH

- Don't hurry me. Hurrying me tends to make me forget and then I tend to get confused.
- If I forget something, remind me gently. If I seem to forget that company is coming or that we are due to be somewhere, help me realize that it is okay if we are a little late or that everything needed is not ready.
- Do not keep asking questions. This frustrates me and makes me feel like I am being tested.
- When I forget, either laugh with me or hug me, but please do not try to make excuses for me. When you do that, it makes me angry and I feel that you do not understand what I am feeling inside.
- When I say, "I don't know how to turn the oven on," etc. just come and help me. No words are needed and chances are, tomorrow I will be able to do it on my own. When I tell you something "dumb" that I did, please listen and try to understand that what I am really trying to tell you that I am scared and hurting. I need to be loved and given time to talk about what is happening to me.
- When I am silent and unable to sleep, chances are that I am struggling with my own fears about how this is going to hurt you as time goes on. I am asking myself what is going to happen to me and how are we as a family going to come and survive.
- Try to understand that some days I almost convince myself that there is nothing wrong with me... and then there are days when I have no doubt that my head is not working normally. These latter days are the ones when you're most apt to find me down in spirit. Try to understand that I am really finding it difficult to believe that this is really happening to me. The big questions "why?" and "how long?" keep going in my head.