

Planning for a Caregiver Emergency

Have you ever said to yourself ...

- *What would happen to my loved one with Alzheimer's or dementia if I became ill or had an accident?*
- *Who would take care of my loved one if I had to be hospitalized?*

(What happens if there is no family to help, or all children and/or siblings live out of town, or the neighbors you count on are out of town?)

Here are some suggestions on how to be prepared for the emergency that we all hope will never come:

Have a Contingency Plan.

Ask yourself: Where would my loved one go or who would come to my home and be with my spouse?

Remember the 2-2-2 Rule

*Who could care for my loved one for the first **two hours** at the time of an emergency?*
Consider friends and neighbors, your church, members of your support network.

*Who could help for the first **two days**?*

Consider pre-registering with a facility, home health agency - other resources that could care for your loved one for two days, possibly until family members could come.

*Who could help for **Two Weeks**?*

Consider which family members might come for two weeks if you were seriously ill. Would your loved one need to go to a facility? If so, can you pre-register?
(Call the Alzheimer's Support Network at 262-8388 for help developing a 2-2-2 plan.)

Complete a "Typical Day" Sheet

Describe a typical day for your loved one. Include such items as:

Medications (what times are they taken, does the person need help?)

Food likes and dislikes (don't forget any food allergies)

Does he or she go for a walk?

Is there a favorite TV show?

Does he or she need help in the bathroom? Wear protective garments?

What other information might help someone caring for your loved one?

Send a copy of this sheet to your family. Put a copy with your File of Life. Give a copy to your friend or neighbor. The more you are able to communicate what a

typical day is in the life your loved one with dementia, the easier the care will be in your absence.

File of Life:

The File of Life program is a free, comprehensive program that places vital personal health information prominent locations. Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT's) Police, and Fire Department personnel are trained to look for File of Life information in the home and on your person. . We strongly recommend that you complete a "File of Life" for both you and your loved one.

Emergency Information needed for temporary placement in a facility.

1. Form 1823-becomes doctor's orders for the facility. We have blanks in our office for you to take to your doctor to complete. You keep the form until you need *it. It Must be updated quarterly.*
2. Durable Power of Attorney (DPOA) - for legal and financial decisions.
3. Health Care Surrogate - for medical decisions.
4. Living Will - for end of life decisions.
5. Health Information (HIPPA) release- for release medical information
6. Typical Day Sheet- probably the most important for your loved one's comfort during an emergency placement. The typical day gives the facility *practical* information to care for them properly.
7. List of contact names and phone numbers so that the facility can keep family updated and problem solve when necessary.

Additional programs that are important for your planning:

Wanderer's Identification Program. The Alzheimer's Support Network together with local law enforcement provides the Wanderer's Identification Program - a special registry that can help reunite loved ones with those who have wandered away. A bracelet or "dog tag" is provided.

Other options (fees involved):

Project LifeSaver (a national program to identify potential wanderers.)

Medical Alert Systems

Senior Connection Program

The Senior Connection Program utilizes volunteers to call and check on seniors Monday through Friday. This program can give you and your out of town family peace of mind on a daily basis.

Special Needs Shelter is organized by the Collier County Emergency Management Department.

They have taken into account the needs of our families dealing with dementia and have created a place where we can go during an emergency such as hurricane. Register by calling (239) 774-8444. They will send you an information packet to fill out regarding medical condition and needs. Know that you don't have to go if you register. It is always your option. If you go, they will see to it that your animals are cared for also.

Call the Support Network (262-8388) for an appointment to create, update or check your emergency plan.