



## COVID-19 CAREGIVER TIP SHEET

## PLANNING AHEAD WHEN SOMEONE GETS SICK

COVID-19 is a new illness that we have never had to deal with before. Older adults and people that have other health problems are at higher risk of getting this new illness. This is why it is important to plan ahead. Thinking about “what if someone gets COVID-19?” can be scary, but very important, especially when you are caring for someone with dementia.

### SIGNS TO WATCH OUT FOR



- A person with dementia may not be able to say that he/she is not feeling well. If the person is acting very differently, it could be a sign he/she is sick. Some examples are: more confused than usual, more quiet than usual, or suddenly not making it to the bathroom in time.
- If you see any changes or are worried, call the doctor as soon as possible and do what he/she says.
- If the person with dementia has a fever, cough, or a hard time breathing, call the doctor right away. If you cannot get in touch with the doctor or symptoms are very bad, go to urgent care, the emergency room, or call 911.

### PLAN AHEAD



- The safest place for you and the person with dementia is at home. Can you ask other family members, friends, or neighbors to drop off food for you? See if you can call your pharmacy to order medicines and have them mailed to you. Don't forget about your medicines too. The less you leave your home, the better.
- Create a list of emergency contacts with family, friends, neighbors, people from your church, drivers, doctors, and community organizations that can help with things like food delivery.
  - Put this list in a place that is easy to find, like on the refrigerator door. Talk to the people on your list to see who can help you if you need help.
- Talk to your family, friends, and neighbors to create plans if someone gets sick.
  - What if the person with dementia gets sick or if you get sick? Who can help? Who can provide care while you are sick? Do you have instructions written out? Where do you keep medicines? Is there a room where the person who is sick can stay? Do you have enough supplies and food?

## PLAN AHEAD (CONT.)

- Who is legally in charge of making medical and legal decisions for the person with dementia? Who is legally in charge of making *your* medical and legal decisions? Advanced care planning documents should have these wishes written out. They should be signed and on file in the home.

## IF SOMEONE GETS SICK



- Call your doctor and follow what he/she says.
- Keep the person who is sick in a room that is away from other people in the house. You should not allow visitors.
- Make sure that someone at home is keeping tables, dishes, doorknobs, and light switches clean and disinfected.
- Do not share personal items, like food, cups, or bottles of water.
- Wash your hands often, and try to stay away from the person who is sick as much as possible.
- If you need to be near the person who is sick, try to have them wear a mask. If it is hard to get them to wear a mask (and it may be), then you can wear a mask. Wearing a mask may be scary for the person with dementia, but it is important to try to protect yourself. Try to understand his or her feelings and address them by soothing or distracting them.

To learn more about COVID-19, visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)