People with Alzheimer's can live in their homes, as long as safety measures are in place. As Alzheimer's progresses, a person's abilities change. But with some creativity and problem solving, you can adapt the home environment to support these changes.

* [How dementia affects safety](https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/safety/home-safety#howdementiaaffects)
* [Home safety tips](https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/safety/home-safety#safetytips)

**How dementia affects safety**

With creativity and flexibility, you can create a home that is both safe and supportive of the person's needs for social interaction and meaningful activity.

Alzheimer's disease causes a number of changes in the brain and body that may affect safety. Depending on the stage of the disease, these can include:

**Judgment:** forgetting how to use household appliances

**Sense of time and place:** getting lost on one's own street

**Behavior:** becoming easily confused, suspicious or fearful

**Physical ability:** having trouble with balance

**Senses**: experiencing changes in vision, hearing, sensitivity to temperatures or depth perception

**Home safety tips**

**Home Safety Checklist**

For a comprehensive guide of home safety checks, see the Home Safety Checklist.

* **Evaluate your environment.**A person with dementia may be at risk in certain areas of the home or outdoors. Pay special attention to garages, work rooms, basements and outside areas where there are more likely to be tools, chemicals, cleaning supplies and other items that may require supervision.
* **Avoid safety hazards in the kitchen.**Install a hidden gas valve or circuit breaker on the stove so a person with dementia cannot turn it on. Consider removing the knobs. Use appliances that have an auto shut-off feature. Keep them away from water sources such as sinks. Remove decorative fruits, sugar substitutes and seasonings from the table and counters.
* **Be prepared for emergencies.**Keep a list of emergency phone numbers and addresses for local police and fire departments, hospitals and poison control helplines.

**Make sure safety devices are in working order.**Have working fire extinguishers, smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.

* **Install locks out of sight.**Place deadbolts either high or low on exterior doors to make it difficult for the person to wander out of the house. Keep an extra set of keys hidden near the door for easy access. Remove locks in bathrooms or bedrooms so the person cannot get locked inside.
* **Keep walkways well-lit.**Add extra lights to entries, doorways, stairways, areas between rooms, and bathrooms.  
  Use night lights in hallways, bedrooms and bathrooms to prevent accidents and reduce disorientation.
* **Remove and disable guns or other weapons.**The presence of a weapon in the home of a person with dementia may lead to unexpected danger. Dementia can cause a person to mistakenly believe that a familiar caregiver is an intruder.
* **Place medications in a locked drawer or cabinet.**To help ensure that medications are taken safely, use a pill box organizer or keep a daily list and check off each medication as it is taken.
* **Remove tripping hazards.**Keep floors and other surfaces clutter-free. Remove objects such as magazine racks, coffee tables and floor lamps.
* **Watch the temperature of water and food.**It may be difficult for the person with dementia to tell the difference between hot and cold. Consider installing an automatic thermometer for water temperature.
* **Avoid injury in the bathroom.**Install walk-in showers. Add grab bars to the shower or tub and at the edge of the vanity to allow for independent, safe movement. Add textured stickers to slippery surfaces. Apply adhesives to keep throw rugs and carpeting in place, or remove rugs completely.
* **Improve laundry room safety.**Secure and lock all cleaning products such as detergent, liquid laundry “pacs” and bleach. Prevent access to the washer and dryer. Keep emergency number for poison control posted. If possible, keep the door to this room locked.
* **Assess safety hazards in the garage and/or basement.**Secure hand and power tools including equipment such as lawn mowers and weed trimmers. Keep poisonous chemicals such as gasoline, spray paint and paint thinner out of reach. Install a garage door safety sensor.
* **Support the person's needs.**Try not to create a home that feels too restrictive. The home should encourage independence and social interaction. Clear areas for activities.