



SAUNDERS HOUSE

MAIN LINE SENIOR CARE ALLIANCE

CELEBRATING
150 YEARS!

A Healthy Tradition of Care and Wellness

Tips for a Happy Holiday for You and Your Loved One with Memory Loss

For those caring for loved ones with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia, the holiday season can be especially challenging. The additional activities that surround the holidays typically demand even more of the caregiver's time and energy and frequently create greater levels of stress in their lives. In fact, the holidays can be physically and emotionally draining for caregivers and sometimes even overwhelming.

Fortunately, there are steps you can take to limit the stress and keep the season in proper perspective. The **Mayo Clinic** and the **Alzheimer's Association** offer the following tips.

- **Be Practical** – You can only do so much! Set realistic expectations for yourself and your loved one. Avoid taking on too many tasks and consider scaling down your traditions (e.g. limiting travel and reducing your number of guests for parties).
- **Prepare Your Loved One as Early as Possible** – Prepare your loved one for holiday visitors well ahead of time. Provide a private “sanctuary” that your loved one can retreat to when things get too hectic.
- **Limit Your Decorations** – Over decorating and using bright blinking lights can cause overstimulation. Avoid lighted candles and other safety hazards, as well as decorations that could be mistaken for edible treats such as artificial fruits. Also do not rearrange your furniture as this can cause confusion.
- **Keep Things Calm** – Loved ones with dementia can feel overwhelmed or irritated with the change in normal routine and increased level of noise, people and overall stimulation. Try to limit your number of guests and visitors at any one time. If your loved one is in the earlier stages of the disease, keep in mind they may also have anxiety about others noticing their impairment.
- **Involve Your Loved One to the Extent They Are Able** – You can share the joy with your loved one and enjoy the season in many ways. Take a ride to see holiday decorations, sing or listen to holiday music, read cards, bake cookies or hang ornaments together.
- **Be Open and Honest with Others About Your Loved One** – Let family and friends know about your loved one's condition and your concerns. Prepare them for what to expect and how best to communicate with your loved one. Let them know that their patience and understanding is important and much appreciated.
- **Give Safe, Useable Gifts** – Your loved one will enjoy such gifts as photo albums of family and friends, stuffed animals or soft pillows, favorite music, videos and movies and simple games.
- **Ask for Help and Support** – Frequently, friends and relatives want to help, but are not sure how. Ask them for *specific* assistance during the holidays (e.g., “Please take Mom to her doctor's appointment next Friday.”)



SAUNDERS HOUSE

MAIN LINE SENIOR CARE ALLIANCE

CELEBRATING
150 YEARS!

A Healthy Tradition of Care and Wellness

Also, a gift certificate for respite care can afford your loved one a change of scenery while providing you with some valuable time away from your caregiving duties. This will enable you to relax, recharge your batteries or spend time with friends.

- **When Visiting or Traveling** – When visiting friends and family, take a favorite “comfort item” for your loved one and prepare the hosts for your loved one’s special needs. This should include a quiet area away from the crowd and noise. If you’re traveling distances, be sure to plan ahead for all possible eventualities.

Discover Our Healthy Tradition of Care and Wellness

Located adjacent to Lankenau Medical Center, **Saunders House** – [part of Main Line Senior Care Alliance](#) – has a celebrated tradition of providing [exceptional care and services](#) to seniors and their families. It’s a tradition we’re proud to continue.

Today, Saunders House offers a range of services – including [short-term rehabilitation](#), [traditional nursing care](#), [restorative care](#), [memory care](#), [respite care](#) and specialized care for individuals with visual impairments – all in a setting that is warm, welcoming and nurturing.

For more information on **Saunders House**, our Short-Term Rehabilitation program and other professional services, please call us today at **(610) 658-5100** or [contact us](#) online.

Disclaimer: *The articles and tip sheets on this website are offered by Saunders House/Bryn Mawr Terrace and Main Line Senior Care Alliance for general informational and educational purposes and do not constitute legal or medical advice. For legal or medical advice, please contact your attorney or physician.*