

How to support independent living

The following day-to-day strategies may help support a person with Alzheimer's disease who lives alone. Assess the abilities of the person before initiating any of these strategies.

Concern	Strategy	Benefits	Drawbacks
Safety	Leave a set of house keys with trusted neighbours.	Access to the home is available. Someone can enter if there is a problem.	Neighbours not always at home.
	Arrange for someone to call or visit once a day.	Regular checks can reassure the person as well as family. May be able to monitor areas of concern.	Only once a day. Problems may arise at other times
	Register with MedicAlert® Safely Home® .	Provides peace of mind for the person and family should the person wander away from home and become confused	
	Appliance safety measures: Automatic shut off kettle. Remove fuses in the stove, put burners on timers, shut off gas. Lower temperature of hot water heater.	Minimizes the chance of accident	Some people may find the changes confusing or frustrating.
	Occupational therapists and social workers assessments from community support agencies	Identify risk and enhance safety	
	Emergency call system.	Person has 24-hour access to help should a problem arise.	Person may not be able to understand concept or use of call button.
Daily Living	Get help with tasks such as housekeeping and meal preparation, or with personal care such as bathing.	Someone is in the home to supervise activity and provide companionship. Tasks get accomplished.	Person with disease may be reluctant or resistant to accepting help.
	Sort closets and dresser drawers to make only the necessary clothes available.	Makes decisions about what to wear easier.	Does not help if the person has trouble knowing when or how to dress.

Food	Meals on Wheels.	Delivery of hot meal once a day.	No way to monitor if food has been eaten or stored properly.
	Congregate dining (Wheels to Meals)	Enable seniors to remain living in their own homes by encouraging them to get out and dine with other community members	
	Provide toaster oven or microwave for heating food.	Preparation is easier. Less concern about spoilage.	Preparation may still be too complex. The person may not like the food.
Medication	Simplify medication routines. For example, use a pill dispenser. Have someone visit to give pills.	Allows only a small supply of pills at once. Helps person take the pills on the right day and at the right time.	Possibility for confusion about day and time. May not prevent person from taking extra medication, if more than one day's supply is available.
Finances	Use bank-at-home services.	Person does not have to leave home. Personalized service.	Person may not be able to deal with finances.
	Make someone else, such as a substitute decision-maker, responsible for handling finances, such as writing cheques, paying bills, monitoring accounts.	Allows person to manage finances with some independence yet provides protection.	Does not protect from overpayment/ non payment of bills, or scams. Person may not be willing to use new methods or have someone help with finances.
	Direct deposit of cheques and direct payment of bills.	This hands-free approach to banking offers fewer chances for problems.	