



Between Friends
Thoughts on Caregiving

Travel Tips for Caregivers

Summer is vacation time and travel time for many families. If you will be traveling with an older family member with special needs, here are some things to keep in mind:

- ❖ For the memory impaired person, any change in routine can be very unsettling and upsetting. If your family member is confused or forgetful, expect more confusion and disorientation than “usual” when you travel.
- ❖ Keep as close to regular routine as possible in terms of mealtimes and toileting times (easier said than done!)
- ❖ Special events such as weddings, graduations or family reunions can be overwhelming for the memory-impaired person. If possible, have your family member meet with other family members in a more quiet setting, with fewer people around.
- ❖ Have identifying information (with the name and phone number of an emergency contact person) on the memory impaired person at all times. Identification should be kept in a wallet or purse, or use sewn-on labels on the person’s clothing.

- ❖ Better yet, register your family member with the Alzheimer’s Association’s Safe Return program. Call 248-351-0280.

The following tips are helpful for anyone planning a trip:

- ❖ Clear all travel plans with your and/or your family member’s physician. Be sure to get a supply of needed medications and prescriptions for refills as necessary.
- ❖ Take along some extras: eyeglasses, hearing aid batteries, other essential items.
- ❖ Review your own and your family member’s health insurance before the trip to find out about coverage during travel. This is especially important if your destination is out of the country (including Canada!).
- ❖ Book all hotels in advance, and request any special needs in writing, such as handicapped accessible restrooms, etc.
- ❖ If you are traveling by car, make frequent stops for toileting and stretching. Take along tapes or CDs of “golden oldies” (Mitch Miller, big band sound, religious hymns, etc.) or

whatever music your family member enjoys to provide a distraction and soothe anxious moods.

- ❖ If you are traveling by plane, make reservations in advance and state any special needs such as wheelchairs, special meals, advance boarding assistance. If using a walker, make sure it is collapsible so it can be folded and stored in flight. Keep all medications and other essentials with you, in case your checked luggage is lost.
- ❖ Carry emergency information which includes your own and your family member’s name and address; special medical conditions or allergies; doctor’s name, address and phone number; medical insurance information; and names, addresses and phone numbers of individuals to contact at destination.
- ❖ If your family member is unable to travel with you, investigate out-of-home respite care that is available for up to two weeks annually through the Area Agency on Aging 1-B. Call 1-800-852-7795 for information.

Have a safe and enjoyable trip!



A Friend’s House Adult Day Services

A Program of Catholic Services of Macomb
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