



# Health Bulletin



## Tips On Easing The Task Of Caring For Someone With Alzheimer's Disease

(NAPSA)—Caring for a person with Alzheimer's disease takes time and energy. As the disease progresses and people with Alzheimer's lose their ability to perform basic activities of daily living and begin to experience changes in their behavior, they lose independence and need increased care.

For some, taking care of a loved one with Alzheimer's can become a full time job. Many Alzheimer's caregivers report providing over 40 hours of care per week. Some of the many responsibilities caregivers face include: handling household finances and chores, administering medication, driving to and from doctors' appointments, and assisting with some or all activities of daily living, such as dressing or bathing a loved one.<sup>i</sup>

Gloria Rapport has been caring for her husband, Richard, since he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 1996. "It's heartbreaking to watch your husband go from being so independent to shaking and crying because you leave the house."

Working with the doctor to help stabilize Richard's decline made a big difference for both Richard and his wife. Richard's doctor added Namenda® (memantine HCl) to his treatment with an acetylcholinesterase inhibitor. Namenda works differently than



other approved Alzheimer's medicines, and can be used alone or in combination with them.

"Richard has taken Namenda for about two years now and I believe it has helped him have a better quality of life for a longer time," says Gloria. "Initially he could handle some basic tasks like eating and showering and he was content to be on his own for short periods. He was also much more calm and cooperative. Recently, Richard has moved into a full-time care facility, and he has continued to take Namenda." Gloria also feels Namenda has helped Richard maintain an emotional connection to her.

### Taking Care of Yourself

Among all caregivers, Alzheimer's caregivers tend to report the highest level of stress.<sup>ii</sup> Often, they must miss work and family obligations or surrender their own interests, which is why it is so impor-

tant for caregivers to take time out for themselves.

Reducing caregiving time may help ease the burden. With treatment to help slow the progression of Richard's symptoms, Gloria felt more confident leaving Richard at home so she could tend to errands. In fact, according to a study, caregivers of patients receiving Namenda reported that significantly less time—45.8 hours per month—was required for daily care compared to those caring for placebo-group patients.<sup>iii</sup> Gloria also strongly recommends adult day care, which gives the caregiver some time off and provides structure and activities for the individual with Alzheimer's.

Namenda is indicated for moderate to severe Alzheimer's disease and is available by prescription in the U.S. Ask your physician or healthcare provider about Namenda or visit [www.Namenda.com](http://www.Namenda.com).

Namenda (memantine HCl) is contraindicated in patients with known hypersensitivity to memantine HCl or to any excipients used in the formulation. The most common adverse events reported with Namenda vs. placebo ( $\geq 5\%$  and greater than placebo) were dizziness, confusion, headache, and constipation. In patients with severe renal impairment, the dosage should be reduced.

<sup>i</sup>National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP. *Caregiving in the U.S.* 2004 (p. 45, 47, 60). Available at: [www.caregiving.org/04finalreport.pdf](http://www.caregiving.org/04finalreport.pdf) (p. 45, 47, 60)

<sup>ii</sup>Ibid.

<sup>iii</sup>Reisberg B, Doody R, Stöffler A, Schmitt F, Ferris S, Möbius HJ, for the Memantine Study Group. Memantine in moderate-to-severe Alzheimer's disease. *N Engl J Med.* 2003;348:1333-1341.