

# Caregiver Corner

## Tips On Caring For An Alzheimer's Patient

(NAPSA)—Caring for someone with Alzheimer's disease can be a complex and challenging process. Fortunately, there are ways to manage the process so it can be beneficial to both the patient and the caregiver.

Here are some tips:

- Create a "critical contacts" worksheet so you can easily find the names, specializations, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of key medical care providers. You may do the same for providers of social services, as well as family, friends and financial contacts.

- A balanced diet is critical to keeping an Alzheimer's patient emotionally and physically strong. Keeping a food and nutrition log can help keep track of what the patient has eaten each day. Having such a log can also be of assistance during medical visits.

- Prepare a series of lists that document all medications the patient takes on a regular basis as well as a record of all vaccinations and all medical tests, surgeries or operations that the patient has taken or had performed and the result of each.

- Selecting a health care provider is a critical part of a patient's overall treatment plan. When selecting a provider, make sure he or she provides the services you need, is board certified and will accept your insurance.

- Preparing for an appointment with a health care provider can help a patient get the most out of the meeting. Start by having a written record of the date and time of the appointment, the purpose, and any questions you may have for the care provider.

During the appointment, make a record of any tests, diagnosis or information related to medication



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that is discussed, as well as any answers to your questions. Also, note the date and time of the next appointment with that particular practitioner and any changes in the patient's treatment plan.

- According to the experts at the Alliance for Aging Research, there are certain key documents that a patient with Alzheimer's should put in place once the condition has been diagnosed.

For example:

- A financial durable power of attorney that identifies who is authorized to make financial decisions for the patient;

- A similar document—a health care durable power of attorney—that identifies who can make health care decisions for the patient; and

- A living will that addresses end-of-life care, and a will or living trust.

The Personal Health Organizer, available through the Alliance for Aging Research, can help you keep all this information in one place. For more caregiver tips or to order this resource, visit [www.agingresearch.org](http://www.agingresearch.org).