

Maintaining Quality of Life for Persons with Late Stage Dementia

Meeting Care needs in Late Stage

“In many cases, those with [late-stage Alzheimer’s disease](#) need to live in a care facility. If they are at home, they need added support. People with late-stage Alzheimer's disease cannot think of or start activities on their own. So, whether they are at home or in a facility, the goal for late-stage Alzheimer care should be making the person’s quality of life as good as it can be—to be at the highest level of well-being possible, physically, mentally and emotionally. Activities should fit whatever strengths and abilities the person with Alzheimer’s disease has, taking into account the person's life history, likes and dislikes”.

Source: [Alzheimer Society of Canada](#)

People in the late stage:

- Experience severe loss of memory, ability to process information and understanding of time and place
- Lose their ability to speak, although they may still say words or phrases. Non-verbal communication will become more important.
- May rock back and forth or keep calling out the same sound or word. They may also constantly wring their hands, pull at their clothes, tap or fidget. They may even touch themselves inappropriately in public.
- Become more agitated in the late afternoon and early evening, a phenomenon often called “sundowning”
- Need help with eating and using the toilet. They often cannot control passing of urine and stool.
- Lose the ability to walk without help, then the ability to sit without support, the ability to smile, and the ability to hold their head up. The brain appears to no longer be able to tell the body what to do.
- Cannot swallow properly
- May lose weight

Source: [Alzheimer Society of Canada](#)

Other resources

- [Guidelines for Care](#)
- [Quality of Life](#) - For Health Professionals
- [Changing the Culture of Care](#)