



Whether taking a short trip to see friends and family or traveling farther for vacation, it is important to consider the difficulties and benefits of travel for a person with dementia. In the early stages of dementia, a person may still enjoy traveling. As the disease progresses, travel may become too overwhelming. It is imperative to discuss any travel with the individual's physician to evaluate whether or not travel is recommended or safe.

If the individual's doctor feels travel is permissible, consider the individual's abilities, and safety when choosing how and where to travel, including:

- Go with the option that provides the most comfort and least anxiety.
- Stick with the familiar. Travel to known destinations that involve as few changes in daily routine as possible. Try to visit places that were familiar before the onset of dementia.
- Keep in mind that there may come a time when traveling is too disorienting or stressful for the person with dementia.

Other considerations:

- Advise airlines, hotels, or tour operators that you're traveling with a person who has memory impairment. Provide some examples of your safety concerns and special needs.
- Prepare identification items for your traveling companion including an identification bracelet or clothing tag with their full name and your name. Take important health-and legal-related documentation as well.
- Time your travel. If the person with dementia travels better at a specific time of the day, you may want to make plans accordingly. Take breaks along the way for snacks.

- Allow extra time. Avoid the temptation to cram several activities into one day. You and the person may need more time in between activities to relax and rest. Instead, plan for a single activity and have a couple of alternatives in mind if you end up with extra time.
- Maintain daily routines, including sleep and eating schedules.

Have faith in your own knowledge, judgment and experience. No one knows the individual better than you do. While a growing number of hotel and tour operators have oriented their employees in dealing with persons with dementia, you best understand what works and what doesn't. Have confidence in your abilities and enjoy your special time together.