



## THE BRAINS BEHIND SAVING YOURS.™

### KEEP LOVED ONES WITH ALZHEIMER'S SAFE IN WINTER WEATHER

**JANUARY 8, 2020** - Winter can bring about additional challenges for people living with Alzheimer's and their caregivers. Snow, extreme temperatures and early darkness are just some of the season-related changes caregivers need to navigate when caring for someone living with Alzheimer's.

"Winter can be an especially hard time for caregivers and people with dementia. It's harder to get around which can lead to isolation, and cold weather and icy streets make wandering even more dangerous," said Melissa Tucker, Director of Family Services for the Alzheimer's Association Illinois Chapter. "Six out of ten people with dementia will eventually wander, and in severe weather, a wandering incident is even more frightening. Caregivers should consider increasing supervision whenever wandering is a concern. When traveling, make sure there is enough time to dress appropriately, and plan to go slowly when walking to avoid falls. We understand that increasing care or changing your routine can be difficult, and this is something we are here to help people with. Anyone who has questions about caring for a person with dementia or needs support with this can call our 24/7 helpline at 1-800-272-3900 ."

The Alzheimer's Association offers these winter safety tips for those living with Alzheimer's:

- **Be prepared.** Check weather conditions regularly and have emergency plans in place.
- **Bundle up.** People living with Alzheimer's can be at greater risk for hyperthermia because they do not dress appropriately for conditions or cannot communicate weather-related discomfort. Make sure your loved one is dressed and prepared for winter weather conditions.
- **Avoid slips and falls.** People living with Alzheimer's may experience problems with vision, perception and balance. Assume all surfaces are slick; assist the person by taking smaller steps and slowing down, so they can match gait and speed to a safer level.
- **Make daylight last longer.** Shorter days during winter months can also increase the risk of "sundowning." Monitor closely for agitation or restlessness as day transitions into night. Make daylight last by turning on indoor lights earlier, opening curtains or installing motion detector lights.

- **Prevent wandering.** Wandering is a common challenge facing caregivers and can be extremely dangerous in colder conditions. As the weather becomes inclement it is important to keep your loved one with dementia safe by taking extra precautions to prevent wandering.
- **Ask for help** with snow/ice removal, grocery shopping or other errands.

**To discuss this topic further, I would be happy to arrange an interview with an Alzheimer's Association Illinois Chapter expert in the Chicago area.**

Additional safety tips for Alzheimer's caregivers can be found by visiting [alz.org/illinois](http://alz.org/illinois).

### **About the Alzheimer's Association Illinois Chapter:**

The Alzheimer's Association® is the world's leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's research, care and support. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. The Alzheimer's Association Illinois Chapter covers an 87-county area with offices in Chicago, Joliet, Rockford, Springfield, Bloomington, Peoria, Quincy and Southern Illinois. Since 1980, the Chapter has provided reliable information and care consultation; created supportive services for families; increased funding for dementia research; and influenced public policy changes. The Illinois Chapter serves more than half a million Illinois residents affected by Alzheimer's disease, including more than 230,000 Illinois residents living with the disease. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's®. For more information visit [www.alz.org/illinois](http://www.alz.org/illinois) or call our free 24/7 Helpline at 800.272.3900.

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