

# Dementia Network Calgary Resource Guide

## Planning and Preparation:

- Legal Documents
- Safety
- Wandering



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## Introduction

If you are looking at this resource, it is likely that you or someone you know is dealing with dementia. Often, the diagnosis of dementia leaves people feeling upset and uncertain about what to do next. The purpose of this document is to give you some information as well as ideas for where to go for more information on topics that you might be interested in or have questions about. Some of the information and resources may not be relevant to you right now, but the journey with dementia can be a long one, and this resource may be helpful to you along the way.

Wherever you are – worried about the possibility of dementia, newly diagnosed, or further along – we want you to know that there are resources and supports available to you. Every journey is unique and different, and as your needs and questions change, there will be support and someone for you talk to.

You don't need to have a long list of resources and knowledge to find help. These three numbers are a good place to start:

Health Link – Dementia Advice: 811

Alzheimer Society of Calgary: 403-290-0110

Your family doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

## How to Use this Guide

The document is intended to serve as a starting point; each person's situation is unique and different, and as a result, it is difficult to create a resource that answers all potential questions. If you find that this guide doesn't answer your questions, please note that does not mean that there isn't help available for you. To start finding some answers, please call one of the numbers listed above – the Alzheimer Society, the Dementia Advice Line through 811, or your family doctor. Those resources are great starting points for people seeking information about dementia.

This guide is intended for people living in or near Calgary, and most of the resources discussed will be in the Calgary area. If accessing the internet creates difficulty for you please contact the Alzheimer Society of Calgary.

## Legal Documents and Preparation

Preparing the appropriate legal documents can help calm some initial fears and create peace of mind for the person living with dementia and their family members. Links and phone numbers can be found at the end of this section.

- **PERSONAL DIRECTIVE:** Covers decision making authority around personal matters, such as housing, health care, and legal issues, and designates a person to be responsible. A copy of the form can be downloaded from Human Services Alberta. Assistance with the form can be found through the The Kerby Centre.
- **ENDURING POWER OF ATTORNEY:** Outlines a person's wishes related to financial matters and designates a person they feel most comfortable with making decisions on their behalf. It is recommended that this document is created in consultation with a lawyer.
- **WILL:** Outlines a person's wishes after they die. It is recommended to create this in consultation with a lawyer.
- **SUPPORTED DECISION MAKING:** Support Decision Making is a process by which another person can be involved in important conversations, like a doctor's appointment or a meeting with your financial planner. This allows a trusted friend or family member to be present or involved with some of the decisions being made, while not taking away any of the rights of the person with decision making authority.
- **GOALS OF CARE/ADVANCED CARE PLANNING:** A Goals of Care designation order is a form that the health system uses to guide decisions about type and nature of care that a person receives. Discussing this order with your physician will help to make it clear for health care providers, your family, and any other people who might be involved in making decisions, how you wish to be cared for if the time comes that you are unable to speak for yourself. For more information, ask your doctor about the Goals of Care document.

Calgary Legal Guidance offers an Elder Law Program that can offer more information and support with some of these documents. If you don't have anyone you feel you can trust to fulfill these duties, the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee maybe be able to assist you.

### WEB RESOURCES

Personal Directive form: [www.humanservices.alberta.ca](http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca)

Information regarding Power of Attorney: [www.cplea.ca](http://www.cplea.ca)

Supported Decision Making: [www.humanservices.alberta.ca](http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca)

Advance Care Planning and Goals of Care: [www.albertahealthservices.ca](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca)

### PHONE RESOURCES

Kerby Centre – assistance with Personal Directives 403-265-0661

Calgary Legal Guidance – Elder Law Program 403-716-6489

Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee 1-877-427-4525

## Safety

A diagnosis of dementia does not mean an end to many of the activities of daily life. However, there are some areas that need to be considered.

- **Driving:** A diagnosis of dementia does not mean an immediate end to a person's ability to drive. However, it is one of the first things that people often worry and wonder about as driving is an important part of someone's independence and mobility. As it progresses, dementia will affect several abilities related to driving, and the ability to drive should be monitored. While some people with dementia may decide to stop driving on their own, others may not recognize or remember unsafe decisions that they are making.
- **Home Safety:** Staying at home is desirable for many people, regardless of health concerns. With dementia, there are several things that can be done to improve home safety and assist the person in staying at home as long as possible.

It is important to keep the home environment familiar along with simplifying the space to ensure that safety and independence is maintained. The physical and visual-perceptual changes that come with dementia may cause problems with walking, balance, coordination, and depth perception, all of which can create increased risks for falls and accidents.

Areas of the home that may require particular attention include the garage, utility rooms, and outdoor areas.

### WEB RESOURCES

Alzheimer Society of Canada: [www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca)

Independent driving assessments: [www.driveable.com](http://www.driveable.com)

Reporting Driver Safety concerns: [www.transportation.alberta.ca](http://www.transportation.alberta.ca)

## Wandering:

One of the most common concerns around safety for people with dementia is wandering. Wandering occurs when the person with dementia leaves their home or a familiar place and becomes confused and disoriented, and is unable to find their way back.

There are some common reasons why people with dementia may wander, including:

- Being uncomfortable (for example, too hot or too cold)
- Too much noise
- Hunger or pain
- A belief that they need to leave to get to work or for another obligation;

- Not recognizing their surroundings and desiring to return to something more familiar
- Hallucinations or delusions due to the condition
- Boredom or a lack of stimulation
- Excess energy
- Long established habits, such as going for walks regularly

Knowing the reason for the wandering can assist in developing strategies for reducing or preventing the behaviour. For example, if wandering tends to occur at particular times of day, ensuring that activities are scheduled for the same time to provide a distraction.

Working to ensure safety means that multiple strategies should be considered, including strategies for after the person has gone missing.

Whatever the reason for the behaviour, there are some things that can be done to both reduce the risk and ensure a safe return.

The Alzheimer Society of Canada has partnered with Medic-Alert to provide a service that helps to reunite people with dementia with their families after a wandering incident.

The Alzheimer Society of Calgary has developed a checklist for dealing with the police after a person with dementia has left. It is based on the information that the police will need to assist in locating someone and returning them safely.

The Calgary Police Service Vulnerable Person's Registry also helps to ensure that emergency services have quick access to information in the event of an emergency.

## WEB RESOURCES

Alzheimer Society of Calgary: [www.alzheimercalgary.ca](http://www.alzheimercalgary.ca)

Calgary Police Service: [Calgary.ca/cps](http://Calgary.ca/cps)

## PHONE RESOURCES

MedicAlert Safely Home Program 1-855-581-3794

**For more information, or to provide feedback on this document, please contact:**

Alzheimer Society of Calgary  
[www.alzheimercalgary.ca](http://www.alzheimercalgary.ca)  
403-290-0110

OR

Dementia Network Calgary  
[www.dementianetworkcalgary.ca](http://www.dementianetworkcalgary.ca)



# Notes