

# TIPS



## for Effective Communication With Patients With Alzheimer's Disease

Communicating with someone who has Alzheimer's disease or dementia can be challenging. Both understanding and being understood can be difficult. These practical tips may help:

- Approach the person from the front.
- Establish eye contact. Make sure that you have the person's attention before speaking.
- Speak slowly, and use a gentle, calm tone of voice.
- Address the person by name.
- Use simple words and short sentences.
- Allow adequate time for a response (about 20 seconds).
- Do not interrupt.
- Minimize distractions and noise.
- Be mindful of any vision or hearing difficulties.
- Be upbeat and positive.
- If you need to repeat your message, phrase it in the exact same way.
- Keep your facial expressions and body language warm and friendly (eg, a reassuring touch, a smile).
- Give visual cues. Act out messages when possible. Point to things that you are talking about.
- Be aware of nonverbal cues (facial expression, body posture, actions).
- Don't treat a person with dementia as if he or she were a baby or child.
- Don't show frustration, anger, or impatience.
- Don't test the person's memory.

*This page is part of an ongoing series of practical tips for patients with neurologic disorders. If you have compiled clinically relevant tips that you wish to share, please contact the editor at [info@neurologyreviews.com](mailto:info@neurologyreviews.com).*