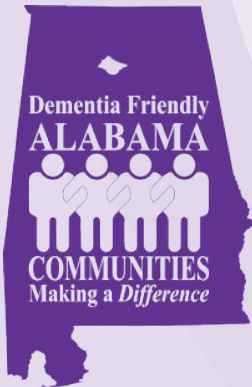


DEMENTIA RESOURCE GUIDE

CONNECTING YOU
TO SERVICES IN ALABAMA





Main line: (334) 240-4680
Screenings: (334) 240-4670



Address: 400 Cotton Gin Road, Montgomery, AL 36117

DementiaFriendlyAL.org



Newsletter SignUp Details

- You can subscribe to receive news about latest programs, services, and resources by entering your email address on their site at DementiaFriendlyAL.org/



Social Media

- **Facebook:** Dementia Friendly Alabama — facebook.com/DementiaFriendlyALA
- **Instagram:** [@dementiafriendlyalabama](https://www.instagram.com/dementiafriendlyalabama)



Alabama Department of Senior Services
201 Monroe Street, Suite 350
Montgomery, Alabama 36104

1-800-AGELINE
1-800-243-5463

AlabamaAgeline.gov

This project was possible through the support of the Alabama Department of Public Health.

What Is Dementia?

Dementia is a word used to describe problems with memory, thinking, talking, and behavior. Over time, these problems get worse.

Dementia is **not** just forgetfulness. Everyone forgets things sometimes. But if a person forgets more or has trouble doing things they used to do easily, it could be dementia.

Dementia can also cause mood changes. A person may get angry, sad, or scared more often.

If you or someone you care about shows these signs, talk to a doctor. A doctor can find out if it is dementia or something else. Getting help early can make a significant difference.

How Doctors Diagnose Dementia

Memory problems can happen for many reasons. Forgetting things does **not always** mean a person has dementia.

If someone has trouble remembering, thinking, or doing daily things, they should see a doctor. A doctor can help find out what is wrong. The doctor may ask questions, talk to family, and do tests or brain scans. This helps them check for dementia and **rule out** other problems, like infections or depression. If needed, the doctor may send the person to a **specialist** like a brain doctor (neurologist) or mental health doctor (psychiatrist).

Types of Dementia

Here are some of the most common types of dementia explained simply:

Type of Dementia	Cause	Common Signs
Alzheimer's Disease	Brain changes (plaques & tangles)	Memory loss, confusion, asking same questions
Vascular Dementia	Reduced blood flow to the brain (stroke)	Trouble planning, thinking, or making decisions
Lewy Body Dementia	Abnormal proteins in the brain (Lewy bodies)	Seeing things, shaking, confusion, movement changes
Frontotemporal Dementia	Damage to the front part of the brain	Changes in behavior, trouble speaking or understanding
Parkinson's Disease with Dementia	Parkinson's disease leading to brain changes	Slow thinking, memory loss, movement problems
Mixed Dementia	More than one cause (like Alzheimer's + Vascular)	A mix of memory and thinking problems from other types

Do not be afraid to ask your healthcare provider about specific types of dementia.

Common Healthcare Words

Sometimes, healthcare words are hard to understand. Here are some words you may hear — with simple meanings to help you:

Word	What it Means
ADLs (Activities of Daily Living)	Basic things people do every day – like eating, bathing, and getting dressed
Aphasia	Trouble talking, understanding, reading, or writing
Assistive Device	A tool that helps you –like a cane, walker, glasses, or hearing aid
Cognition	How the brain works – thinking, learning, and remembering
Delirium	Sudden confusion that comes and goes. Often caused by illness or medicine
Dementia	A brain disease that makes it hard to think, remember, and take care of yourself
Diagnosis	The name of the health problem a doctor says you have
Dysphagia	Trouble swallowing food or drinks
Gait	The way someone walks
Incontinent	Trouble controlling when you go to the bathroom
Memory	The brain’s way of keeping and using information
Prognosis	What the doctor thinks will happen with the health problem over time
Respite Care	Short-term care that gives family caregivers a break
Vascular	Has to do with blood and blood vessels in the body

Alabama Department of Senior Services

Helping older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers across Alabama

The Alabama Department of Senior Services (ADSS) is a state agency that helps people aged 60 and older, people with disabilities, and their caregivers. ADSS works with 13 **Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs)** around the state to make sure help is available in every county.

These local agencies help older adults stay in their homes, get care, and live with dignity and independence.

What ADSS and the AAAs Do

The AAAs offer many programs and services. These include:

- Help staying independent at home.
- Transportation to doctors or stores.
- Meals at home or at senior centers.
- Help finding a safe place to live.
- Support for caregivers.
- Protection from elder abuse.
- Help with Medicare, Medicaid, and prescriptions.

One Door Alabama – Your First Stop for Help

Each AAA has an **Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC)**. This is also called **One Door Alabama**. You can call or visit your local center to:

- Ask questions.
- Learn what help is available.
- Get help filling out forms.
- Find the right services for your needs.

When you call during business hours, a real person will answer.

Senior Centers in Every County

Alabama has more than **330 senior centers** — at least one in every county. These centers are friendly places where older adults can:

- Eat healthy meals.
- Take part in fun activities.
- Learn about health and wellness.
- Join arts, music, or games.
- Go on group trips.
- Find volunteer opportunities.

Need Help or Have Questions?

Call **1-800-AGE-LINE (1-800-243-5463)** or visit: **AlabamaAgeline.gov**

Alabama Area Agencies on Aging

Alabama Tombigbee Regional Commission (ATRC)

(334) 682-5206 or 888-617-0500 atrcaging.com

Serving Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh, Dallas, Marengo, Monroe, Perry, Sumter, Washington, and Wilcox counties.

Central Alabama Aging Consortium (CAAC)

(334) 240-4666 or 800-264-4680 centralalabamaaging.org

Serving Autauga, Elmore, and Montgomery counties.

East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (EARPDC)

(256) 237-6741 or 800-239-6741 eastalabamaaging.org

Serving Calhoun, Chambers, Cherokee, Clay, Cleburne, Coosa, Etowah, Randolph, Talladega, and Tallapoosa counties.

Lee-Russell Council of Governments (LRCOG)

(334) 749-5264 lrcog.com

Serving Lee and Russell counties.

Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging (M4A)

(205) 670-5770 or 866-570-2998 m4a.org

Serving Blount, Chilton, Shelby, St. Clair, and Walker counties.

Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments (NACOLG)

(256) 389-0500 or 800-383-5845 nacolg.org

Serving Colbert, Franklin, Lauderdale, Marion, and Winston counties.

North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG)

(256) 355-4515 narcog.org

Serving Cullman, Lawrence, and Morgan counties.

Southern Alabama Regional Council on Aging (SARCOA)

(334) 793-6843 or 800-239-3507 sarcoa.org

Serving Barbour, Coffee, Covington, Dale, Geneva, Henry, and Houston counties.

South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC)

(251) 433-6541 sarpc.org

Serving Baldwin, Escambia, and Mobile counties.

South Central Alabama Development Commission (SCADC)

(334) 244-6903 scadc.net

Serving Bullock, Butler, Crenshaw, Lowndes, Macon, and Pike counties.

Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments (TARCOG)

(256) 830-0818 tarcog.us

Serving DeKalb, Jackson, Limestone, Madison, and Marshall counties.

United Way Area Agency on Aging of Jefferson County (UWAAA)

(205) 458-3330 uwaaa.org

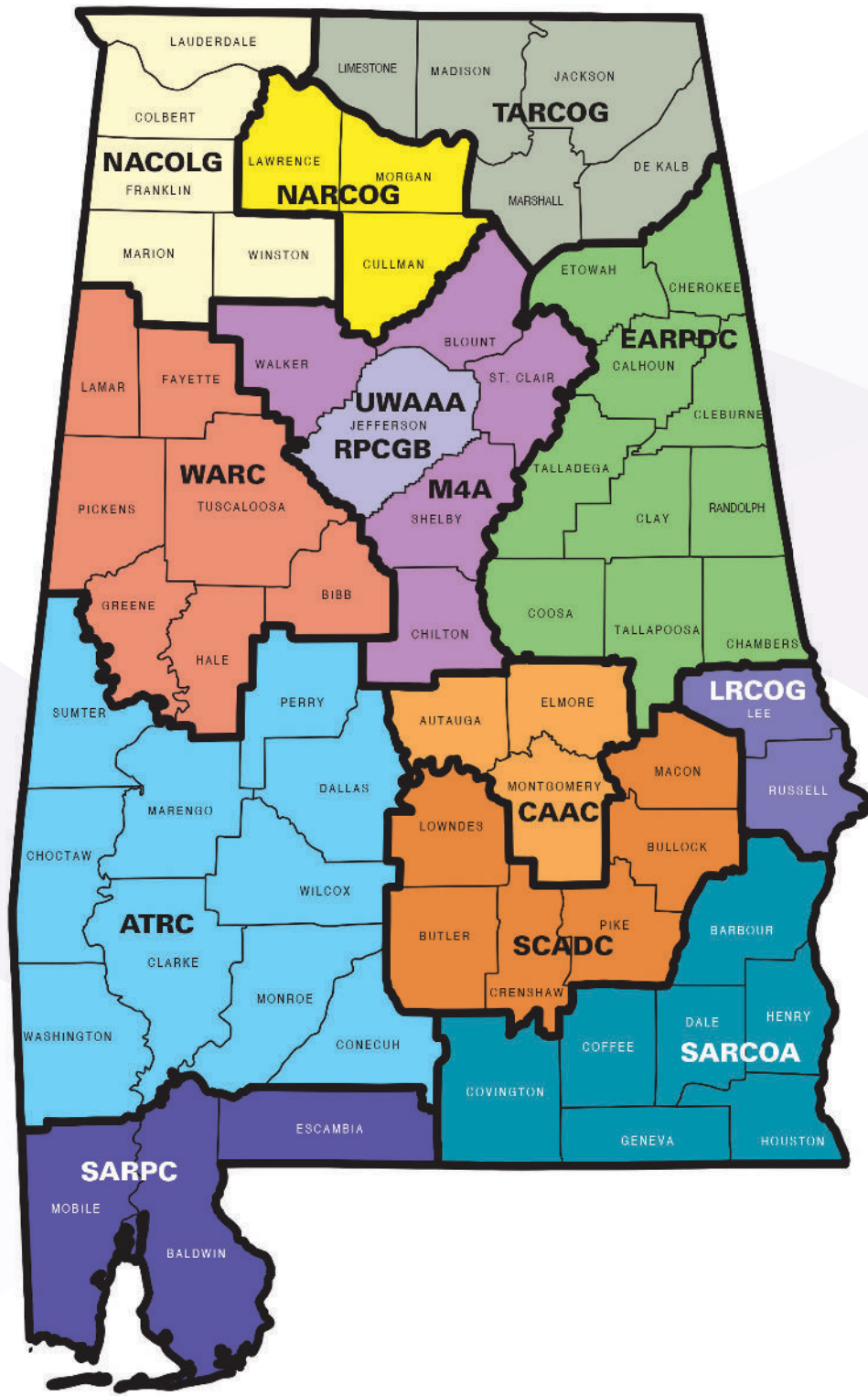
Serving Jefferson County.

West Alabama Regional Commission (WARC)

(205) 333-2990 or 800-432-5030 westalabamaaging.org

Serving Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, and Tuscaloosa counties.

Alabama Area Agencies on Aging



Support for Family Caregivers

Alabama CARES Program

Caring for a loved one is important — but it can also be hard. You do not have to do it alone.

Alabama CARES is a program that helps family and informal caregivers get support, take breaks, and find resources to care for loved ones at home. Alabama CARES does not take the place of a family caregiver. Instead, it gives support to help you keep caring for your loved one as long as it is safe and right for you.

Who Can Get Help from Alabama CARES?

You may qualify if you are:

- Caring for someone age 60 or older.
- An adult helping someone with Alzheimer's or dementia.
- A grandparent (age 55+) raising grandchildren.
- A parent (age 55+) caring for an adult child with a disability.

You do not need to earn a certain income to get help. Caregivers with the greatest need may get services first.

What Does Alabama CARES Provide?

• Information & Education

- Learn about local services.
- Join caregiver classes or support groups.
- Get one-on-one help making decisions.

• Help Finding Services

- Talk to a care coordinator who can connect you to programs.

• Respite Care

- Get a short break while someone else helps care for your loved one.

• Help at Home

- Get support like incontinence supplies, safety items, or help with home changes.

How do I apply for services?

Call the local Area Agency on Aging (AAA) at 1-800-AGE-LINE (1-800-243-5463) or visit AlabamaAgeline.gov.

Caregiver Tips

Being a caregiver is important, but it can also be hard. These tips may help you care for your loved one — and yourself.

- Make care plans while your loved one can still share their wishes.
- Include family and ask others to help with planning and daily care.
- Use Music – Old songs can bring back happy memories.
- Be Patient with Games or Activities – Let them go at their own pace.
- Keep It Simple – Use short sentences and clear steps.
- Speak Slowly and Clearly – Give time to understand.
- Respect Choices – Let them make decisions when possible.
- Don't Argue About Memory – Arguing can cause stress.
- Avoid Asking “Do You Remember?” – It may cause frustration.
- Keep a Daily Routine – Doing things the same way each day helps them feel safe.
- Let Them Help – If safe, let them do things on their own.
- Make Eating Easier – Use straws or finger foods if needed.
- Watch for Pain – Sudden anger or frustration may mean they are hurting.

Caregiver Checklist

This checklist can help you stay organized and prepare for the future.

1. Talk to the Doctor

- ☐ What type of dementia does my loved one have?
- ☐ What treatments are available?
- ☐ What changes should I expect?
- ☐ Are there caregiver support groups?

2. Make a Care Plan

- ☐ Create a daily schedule for meals, medicine, and activities.
- ☐ Plan ahead for future care needs.

3. Medications

- ☐ Keep a list of all medications and dosages.
- ☐ Learn about side effects.
- ☐ Ask about non-drug treatment like memory games.

4. Talk to Family & Friends

- ☐ Share the diagnosis with close family and friends.
- ☐ Ask for help and support when needed.

5. Think About Living Arrangements

- ☐ Can they stay at home?
- ☐ Do we need home changes (like grab bars or ramps)?
- ☐ Look into Meals on Wheels or adult day services.

6. Plan for Money & Insurance

- ☐ Check what Medicare or if insurance will cover.
- ☐ Learn about financial aid programs.

7. Make Legal Plans

- ☐ Create or update a will.
- ☐ Create or update a living will or health care proxy.
- ☐ Set up power of attorney for health and finances.

8. Backup Care Plan

- ☐ Who will help if I get sick?
- ☐ Make a list of trusted people who can step in.

9. Take Care of Yourself

- ☐ Go to your own doctor visits.
- ☐ Take breaks and rest.
- ☐ Find a support group or someone to talk to.




Support Groups



Being a caregiver can be lonely and stressful. Support groups can help you:

- Talk with others who understand what you're going through.
- Get tips and advice.
- Feel less alone.

Many **Area Agencies on Aging** offer caregiver classes and support groups. Some also help with things like adult day services or sitter services.

 **Call 1-800-AGE-LINE (1-800-243-5463)** to find a group near you.

Respite Care – Taking a Break is OK

Caring for someone every day can be exhausting.

Respite care gives you a short break while someone else cares for your loved one.

You may need a break to:

- Rest and recharge.
- Go to your own appointments.
- Spend time with friends or family.

Respite care can happen:

- In your home.
- At an adult day center.
- At a short-term care facility.

Knowing your loved one is safe helps you relax. Planning ahead makes it easier.

If your loved one is on hospice care, Medicare may cover short-term respite services.

Medications – Staying Safe with Medicine



People with Alzheimer's or dementia might often forget things. This can make taking medicine unsafe if they don't have help.

They might:

- Forget to take their medications.
- Take it too many times.
- Take the wrong pills.
- Get sick from mixing medicines.

What You Can Do

Watch Closely

- Make sure they take the right pills, at the right times.
- Don't leave pills in cups or boxes on the counter.
- Never let them take medicine alone.

If your loved one starts acting quite different — like getting angry, seeing things, or having more bathroom problems — call the doctor. It could be a reaction to medicine or a new illness.

Lock Away Medicines

- Keep all pills, vitamins, creams, and sprays out of sight and out of reach in a safe place.

Talk to the Doctor or Pharmacist

- Never stop a medicine without asking the doctor.
- Bring **all medicines** to every doctor visit — even vitamins and over the counter items.
- Ask if the medicine can be crushed or put in food if they won't take it easily.

Keeping the Home Safe



People with dementia may forget how to use things, trip, and fall more easily, or leave things turned on by mistake. A safe home can help prevent injuries and reduce worry.

What Could Happen?

Someone with dementia might:

- Trip or fall because of poor balance.
- Forget to turn off the stove or water.
- Use knives or matches unsafely.
- Leave the house without telling anyone.

What You Can Do

Keep Things Simple

- Clear out clutter and keep rooms tidy.
- Put things they use often in the same place every day.
- Remove items that are breakable or not needed.

Look at the Floor

- Take away small or slippery rugs.
- Don't shine or wax floors.

- Keep floors dry (especially in bathrooms and kitchens).
- Keep cords, shoes, and other objects off the floor.
- Use sturdy chairs and tables that won't tip over.

Lock Up Dangerous Items

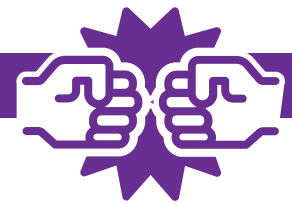
- Lock away all medicines, cleaning supplies, and alcohol.
- Put sharp items (like knives, scissors, guns, tools), out of reach.
- Store lighters and matches in a locked drawer.

Don't Leave Them Alone

- In the kitchen when cooking.
- In the bathroom with water running.
- With burning cigarettes, candles, or fireplaces.
- Near open doors, gates, or outside alone.

Tip: A safe home = a calmer, happier home. Making minor changes now can prevent big problems later.

Anger, Frustration, & Fighting



People with Alzheimer’s or other dementias can feel **confused, scared, or upset** — even in places or situations that seem normal to others. Sometimes they may yell, hit, or cry. They are not doing this on purpose.

This behavior is caused by **changes in the brain**.

What Might Cause It?

They may get upset when they:

- See a new person or place.
- Can’t open a door or find something (like glasses or a purse).
- Don’t understand what’s happening.
- Feel rushed, tired, or in pain.
- Are scared of things like the shower or loud noises.

What You Can Do

Keep Things Simple

- Speak slowly and clearly and use fewer words. Don’t take it personally, their words or actions are **not about you**. Try to understand what they might be feeling, not just what they say.

- Keep noise low and lights soft.
- Don’t argue or correct them – it often makes things worse.
- Give them one task at a time.

Try a New Activity

- Offer a snack or favorite treat.
- Turn on calm music or a favorite TV show.
- Look at photos together.
- Ask a question about something they like (sports, pets, cooking).

Change the Space

- Move to a quieter room.
- Dim bright lights.
- Remove items that could cause harm.

Keep Everyone Safe

- Lock away weapons, sharp objects, or heavy tools.
- Stay calm — back away slowly if they get aggressive.
- If you feel unsafe, **call 911**.



People with dementia may feel **sad, lonely, or empty**. They may stop doing things they used to enjoy. Sometimes, they sleep too much, eat too little, or seem tired all the time.

This could be **depression**, which is common in people with dementia.

They may feel this way because:

- Friends stop visiting.
- They can't do things they used to do.
- They feel confused or afraid.
- They know something is wrong but don't know how to fix it.

What You Can Do

Help Them Stay Active

- Make a simple daily plan (meals, music, walking).
- Try gentle exercises, like walking or stretching.
- Watch a funny show or listen to happy music.
- Cook favorite meals together.
- Help them spend time with others.
- Try adult day services or senior centers.

Talk and Listen

- Ask how they are feeling.
- Let them talk — don't say things like "cheer up."
- Give comfort — tell them they are safe and loved.
- A gentle hug (if they enjoy it) can help.
- Consider talking to a counselor or support person.

Make the Home Safe

- Remove anything dangerous (knives, guns, alcohol, pills).
- Lock away cleaning supplies and sharp tools.
- Think about pets. Some pets may cause a person to trip or fall. Decide if it's safe to keep them in the home.

Call a Doctor If

- They talk about hurting themselves.
- They stop eating or lose a lot of weight.
- They sleep all the time or never sleep.
- They cry often or seem very hopeless.

Driving – Knowing When to Stop



Driving helps people feel free and independent. But for someone with dementia, driving can become **dangerous** over time.

They may forget where they are, get confused in traffic, or have slower reactions. At some point, they will need to stop driving — even if they don't want to.

Watch for Warning Signs

- Getting lost while driving.
- Traffic tickets or accidents.
- New scratches or dents on the car.
- Complaining about other drivers.
- Confusing the brake and gas pedal.
- Friends or family afraid to ride with them.

What You Can Do

Talk to the Doctor

- Ask the doctor to say it's time to stop.
- The doctor can send a report to the **Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)**.

Ask for Help

- A trusted friend, minister, or family member can talk with them.
- Say you'll help get them where they need to go.
- Remind them you want them to be safe — and to keep others safe too.

Use Kind Tricks if Needed

- Hide the keys.
- Park the car out of sight
- Remove the battery or starter wire.
- Give them a key that doesn't work.

Offer Other Options

- Help them use rides from friends, family, or community groups.
- Try services like **Uber**, **Lyft**, or church vans.
- Make going places **fun** — turn it into an outing together.

Tip: Selling the car may help.



People with dementia may forget to eat or drink. They may not feel thirsty or hungry. They might also forget how to use a fork or cup. This can lead to **weight loss, weakness, or confusion**.

What Might Happen?

They may

- Forget if they already ate.
- Not ask for food or water.
- Get confused by too many food choices.
- Struggle to use a fork, spoon, or knife.
- Feel like they are choking.
- Make a mess or eat with their hands — and that's okay!

What You Can Do

Keep Mealtime Simple

- Eat in the **same place** every day.
- Turn off the TV or loud sounds.
- Use **plain plates** and cups (no patterns).
- Choose a plate color that's different from the table.

Offer the Right Foods

- Serve **soft foods** they can chew easily.
- Give **finger foods** if using utensils is hard.
- Try 5–6 **small meals** instead of 3 big ones.
- Avoid food that is too hot or too cold.

Eat with Them

- Sit and eat with them — show them what to do.
- Let them take their time — don't rush.
- Use straws or no-spill cups if needed.

Call a Doctor If

- They lose weight quickly.
- They often choke or cough while eating.
- They suddenly seem more confused.

Tip: Don't Worry About Messes. Spills happen. What matters most is that they're eating and staying healthy.

Sundowning – Confusion in the Late Afternoon or Evening



People with dementia may become more confused, restless, or upset in the late afternoon or evening. This is called sundowning. It can happen every day or only sometimes.

They may

- Pace or walk back and forth.
- Say things that don't make sense.
- See or hear things that aren't there.
- Think someone is stealing or lying.
- Get scared or upset without a clear reason.

This is **not their fault** — it's caused by changes in the brain.

What You Can Do

Make the Home Calm and Comfortable

- Turn on lights **before it gets dark**.
- Keep the home quiet in the evening.
- Play **soothing music**.
- Offer a fidget blanket to help with restlessness.
- Close curtains to block reflections or shadows.
- Clear space for safe pacing if they need to walk.

Watch What They Eat and Drink

- Give a **big meal at lunch** and a light meal at dinner.
- Limit **caffeine and sugar** after 2:00PM.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Offer water regularly.

Keep a Daily Routine

- Help them **wake up and go to bed** at the same time each day.
- Plan **busy activities** (like doctor visits or baths) in the morning.
- Take a short walk or stretch in the afternoon to use up energy.

Stay Calm and Reassuring

- Speak gently.
- Try a new activity if one doesn't work.
- Sit with them or offer a hand to hold.
- Let them know they are **safe and not alone**.

Tip: Not every day is the same. Some days will be harder than others. Be flexible and try different things to see what helps.

Sleeping – Helping Your Loved One Rest Better



People with dementia often have trouble **sleeping at night**. They may wake up often, sleep during the day, or become confused about what time it is. Poor sleep can make their confusion worse and make caregiving harder.

What Might Happen?

They may

- Stay awake most of the night.
- Take long naps during the day.
- Feel tired and confused.
- Walk around or try to leave the house.
- Get upset when it's time for bed.

What You Can Do

Keep A Regular Schedule

- Wake up at the same time every morning.
- Do light activities during the day like walking or gardening.
- Avoid naps later in the day.
- Follow the same bedtime routine every night.

Make the Bedroom Calm and Safe

- Keep the bedroom quiet and dark.

- Use **night lights** in the hallway and bathroom.
- Avoid loud noises or bright screens before bed.
- Make sure the bed and room feel comfortable.

Watch What They Eat and Drink

- No coffee, tea, soda, or chocolate after **2:00 PM.**
- Limit liquids in the evening to avoid bathroom trips.
- Don't give alcohol — it can affect sleep.

Try Soothing Activities

- Read a book or listen to soft music.
- Give a gentle hand or foot massage.
- Sit quietly together before bed.

Call a Doctor If

- They snore loudly or stop breathing during sleep.
- They seem sad, anxious, or in pain.
- They go to the bathroom many times at night.
- They sleep all day and stay awake all night.

Tip: Don't use sleeping pills unless the doctor says it's safe. These pills can cause falls and confusion.



Elder abuse means someone is **hurting, neglecting,** or **taking advantage** of an older adult. This abuse can happen at home, in a care facility, or even by family or trusted friends.

Many older adults with dementia are **at higher risk** because they may not be able to speak up or remember what happened.

Types of Elder Abuse

- Abandonment - Leaving someone alone who needs care.
- Emotional Abuse - Yelling, threatening, or making someone feel scared or ashamed.
- Financial Exploitation - Taking or using someone's money or property without permission.
- Neglect - Not giving food, medicine, or care.
- Physical Abuse - Hitting, pushing, or hurting someone.
- Sexual Abuse - Any unwanted touching or sexual contact.

What You Can Do

Know the Warning Signs

- Unexplained bruises, cuts, or weight loss.
- Fear or sadness around certain people.
- Missing money or belongings.
- A caregiver refusing visitors or phone calls.
- A person being left alone too long without help.

Take Action

- Ask your loved one how they feel.
- Visit often and look for changes in mood or health.
- Keep track of who comes in and out of their home.
- Lock up money, checks, and important papers.
- Talk to their doctor, social worker, or local Area Agency on Aging if you're concerned.

How to Report Elder Abuse in Alabama

If you think someone is being abused, **you can report it.**

- Call the Alabama Department of Human Resources Adult Protective Services 1-800-458-7214 (Open 24/7).
- Email: aps@dhr.alabama.gov.
- You can also make a report to your local DHR office or police.
- You do not have to give your name.

Free Elder Abuse Protection Toolkit

The Alabama Department of Senior Services has a free toolkit with more information.

Call **1-800-243-5463** to ask for a copy.

They are also available to download at AlabamaAgeline.gov.



As dementia gets worse, your loved one may need **more help** than you can give at home. There are many care options to help them stay safe, healthy, and supported — and to help you as a caregiver.

Here are the most common options.

1. Adult Day Services – Help During the Day

Adult day services provide a **safe place** for your loved one to go during the day while you work, rest, or take care of other things. These programs offer activities, meals, and supervision.

There are **two kinds** of adult day services:

- **Social model:** Fun activities, music, crafts, meals, and time with others.
- **Medical model:** Includes help from nurses or therapists, as well as social activities.

What You Can Expect

- A safe, structured environment.
- Caregivers who understand dementia.
- Group activities to help with memory and movement.
- Meals and snacks.
- Help with medicine (if medical staff are available).

Tip: Ask your local **Area Agency on Aging** which centers are near you. Visit before enrolling to make sure it feels right for your loved one.

2. Home Health - Care at Home with Medical Help

Home health care brings nurses or therapists to your loved one's home. It is for people who need **medical care** but want to **stay at home**.

This service usually requires a doctor's order and is often paid for by **Medicare** or other insurance.

What Services May Be Included

- Nurse visits for shots, wound care, or health checks.
- Physical, speech, or occupational therapy.
- Help with bathing, dressing, or walking.
- Medical equipment or social work support.

Tip: Your loved one must be **"homebound,"** meaning leaving the house is hard for them without help.

3. Assisted Living Environments

Assisted living communities are places where people live and get help with daily activities like **bathing, dressing, eating, or taking medicine**. They are for people who do not need full-time nursing care but can't live safely alone.

Some facilities have special memory care areas for people with dementia. These may be called **SCALFs** (Specialty Care Assisted Living Facilities).

What's Included

- A room or apartment.
- Meals and housekeeping.
- Help with daily needs.
- Activities and outings.
- Medication reminders.

Cost: Most people pay out of pocket. Ask for a list of costs before moving in.

4. Nursing Home Care – 24/7 Skilled Nursing

Nursing homes provide full-time care for people with serious health needs. This may be the best option if your loved one needs help 24 hours a day or if caregiving at home is no longer safe.

What They Offer

- Skilled nurses and staff available 24/7.
- Help with all daily needs.

- Therapy, medical care, and dementia support.
- Meals, activities, and social time.

Visit different homes before choosing. Ask about **dementia care services** and meet the staff.

5. Hospice Care – Comfort and Support Near the End of Life

Hospice care focuses on **comfort**, not curing illness. It helps people with **serious illness** live as well as possible in their final months. Hospice also supports family members.

Hospice can take place:

- At home.
- In an assisted living facility.

- In a nursing home.
- In a hospital or special hospice facility.

What Hospice Includes

- Pain and symptom management.
- Nurses, aides, social workers, and chaplains.
- Help for family and caregivers.
- Medicine and supplies.
- Grief support after your loved one passes.

Hospice is covered by **Medicare**, **Medicaid**, and many other insurance plans.



Sometimes, people with dementia need special care for **mental health or behavior issues**. These services can help when there are meaningful changes in mood, sleep, appetite, or behavior that can't be managed at home or in regular care settings.

Psychiatric In-Patient Care – Extra Help for Mental and Behavioral Health

Sometimes a person with dementia may need to stay for a brief time in a **psychiatric hospital or mental health facility**. These are often called **geri-psych units**, and they are made to help older adults with serious changes in mood or behavior. This can happen if they:

- Show signs of severe depression, confusion, anger, or agitation.
- Stop eating or sleeping.
- Try to harm themselves or others.
- Have another mental health condition like anxiety or psychosis.

This kind of care is **not to lock them away** — it is to help figure out what's wrong and how to treat it.

What to Expect

- A safe place where doctors and nurses watch them closely.
- Tests to check their mental and physical health.
- A team of professionals who work together to create a care plan.

The team may include:

- Psychiatrists (mental health doctors).
- Nurses and social workers.
- Psychologists and counselors.
- Occupational or recreational therapists.

What You Can Do

- Talk to your **primary care doctor** about whether this care is needed.
- Ask about options near you.
- Stay in touch with the facility and visit when possible.
- **Work with the social worker early** to plan for what happens after discharge.



Help for When Something Feels Wrong

Every person living in a long-term care facility — like a nursing home or assisted living — has **rights**. If you or your loved one ever feels unsafe, unheard, or treated unfairly, you are not alone. Help is available.

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Advocate - A Voice for People in Long-Term Care

A long-term care **ombudsman** is a trained advocate who helps people living in nursing homes, assisted living, and other long-term care facilities. Their job is to **protect residents' rights and well-being**.

What an Ombudsman Can Do

- Listen to **complaints or concerns** from residents, family members, or staff.
- Help **solve problems** between residents and care staff.
- Make sure residents are **treated fairly and respectfully**.

- Teach residents and families about their **rights**.
- Work to improve care at the local, state, and national level.

Who Can Ask for Help?

- Residents of a facility.
- Family members or friends.
- Facility staff.
- Anyone who is worried about someone's care.

You do **not** have to give your name. Everything you say is **confidential**.

How to Reach the Ombudsman in Alabama

Alabama State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

Director: Virginia Moore-Bell

Phone: **334-242-5753**

Visit your local **Area Agency on Aging** to speak with your regional ombudsman.

Understanding the Care Team



Caring for someone with dementia often means working with a **team of healthcare providers**. Each person on the team has a different role, but they all work together to keep your loved one safe and healthy.

Knowing who does what can help you ask the right questions and feel more confident during doctor visits or care planning.

Types of Healthcare Providers You May Meet

Title	What They Do
Primary Care Doctor	Your main doctor. Treats general health problems and helps manage care
Internist	A doctor who treats adults for common health problems like diabetes, high blood pressure, or infections
Neurologist	A brain doctor. Helps diagnose dementia and treat brain-related symptoms
Geriatrician	A doctor who specializes in care for older adults
Psychiatrist	A mental health doctor. Can help with mood, behavior, and dementia medications
Neuropsychologist, PhD or PsyD	A doctor who checks how the brain is working by testing memory, thinking, and behavior
Nurse Practitioner / Physician Assistant (NP / PA)	An advanced practice provider who works with doctors to treat and manage care. Often spends more time with patients than a physician
Social Worker	Helps with emotional support, services, and planning for care and finances
Occupational Therapist	Helps people stay safe and independent at home with daily tasks
Speech Therapist	Helps with speaking, understanding, and swallowing
Physical Therapist	Helps improve movement, balance, and strength
Pharmacist	Checks for medicine safety, side effects, and interactions
Hospice or Palliative Care Team	Provides comfort care when a person has a serious illness or is near the end of life

Tips for Working with the Care Team

- **Write down questions** before appointments.
- **Bring a list of medicines** (including over the counter or vitamins).
- **Keep a notebook** of what each provider says.
- **Ask for things to be repeated or written down** — that's okay!
- **You are part of the team, too.** Speak up about your loved one's needs and changes you notice.



Dementia gets worse over time. That's why it's important to make plans early — while your loved one can still share their wishes and help make decisions.

Having the right legal and financial paperwork in place helps protect your loved one's care, money, and dignity.

Advance Planning – Making Legal and Money Decisions Before It's Too Late

Advance planning means making decisions **before a crisis happens**. It gives families peace of mind and helps avoid problems later.

Even if your loved one already has dementia, it may not be too late to start.

If your loved one can still understand and share their wishes, involve them in the planning. If not, a lawyer can help guide you through the steps needed to make decisions legally and safely.

Legal Documents to Consider

Document	What It Does
Durable Power of Attorney (POA)	Allows someone to make financial decisions if your loved one can't
Healthcare Power of Attorney (HCPOA)	Allows someone to make medical choices when your loved one can't speak for themselves.
Living Will / Advance Directive	Lists the care your loved one wants — or doesn't want — near the end of life.
Will	Says who will get their money, home, or belongings after they pass away.
Trusts	Helps manage property now and may help avoid probate (a court process) later. Consult a lawyer.
Guardianship / Conservatorship	A legal process if your loved one can't make decisions and did not sign POA forms.

You may need a lawyer to help with these documents. Free or low-cost legal help may be available through your **Area Agency on Aging**.

Financial Planning Tips

- Review **bank accounts, income, and bills** together.
- Make sure someone can help **pay bills and manage money**.
- Keep important documents in a **safe, easy-to-find place**.
- Talk to a financial planner or elder law attorney if possible.
- Ask about **Medicaid planning** or long-term care insurance.
- Use direct deposit to avoid lost checks or financial abuse.

Legal Help for Families



You may need legal help to make plans or protect your loved one. Good news — **free or low-cost legal help is available** for many older adults in Alabama.

The **Legal Assistance Program** gives help with legal problems that are not about crimes. You do not have to pay for this help if you qualify.

What Legal Help Can Do for You

You can get help with:

- Making a **Power of Attorney** or **Living Will**.
- Planning for **Medicaid** or long-term care.
- Stopping **scams** or **financial abuse**.
- Dealing with **debt collectors**.
- Setting up a **guardianship** if needed.
- Solving problems with **housing, benefits, or healthcare**.

Who Can Get Free Help?

You may qualify if:

- You are **age 60 or older**, and
- You have **low income**, live in a **rural area**, or need **extra help**.

You do not need to go to court to get help — many services can be done by phone or in person with a legal advocate.

Where to Get Help

- **Area Agencies on Aging (1-800-AGE-LINE)**: can connect you to local legal aid.
- **Alabama Securities Commission**: Offers help spotting financial abuse and scams.
- **Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR)**: Can help with guardianship and protective services.

Paying for Care & Benefits



Caring for someone with dementia can be expensive. This section explains different programs that may help pay for care.

1. Medicare – Help for Older Adults

Medicare is health insurance for people 65 and older and some younger people with disabilities or specific health conditions.

What Medicare Can Help Pay For:

- Hospital stays.
- Short stays in a nursing home (after a hospital stay).
- Hospice care for someone who is extremely sick.
- Some home health care (like nurses or therapists at home).

What Medicare Does Not Cover:

- Long-term care in a nursing home.
- Assisted living.
- Most personal care, like help with dressing or bathing.

Always ask the doctor or provider if Medicare will pay before getting services.

2. Medicaid – Help for People with Low Income

Medicaid helps people who have low income and few assets. It may help pay for:

- Long-term care in a nursing home.
- Home care and support services.
- Health insurance for people with disabilities.

To get Medicaid:

- You must live in Alabama.
- You must be a U.S. citizen or legal resident.
- You must meet income and health needs.

Call 1-800-AGE-LINE (1-800-243-5463) for help applying.

3. Medicaid Waiver Programs – Care at Home Instead of a Nursing Home

Waiver programs help people stay at home or in the community instead of moving into a nursing home.

It may help pay for:

- Home-delivered meals.
- Help with bathing / dressing.
- Home nurse visits.
- Adult day services.
- Ramps or medical equipment.

To qualify:

- Your income and health must meet certain rules.
- You must apply through your local **Area Agency on Aging**.

These programs help people live safely at home longer.

4. Veterans Administration Benefits – Help for Veterans and Their Families

The **Veterans Administration (VA)** offers benefits for veterans and their families. These can include:

- Help at home (home aides, nurses).
- Adult day services.
- Respite care (a break for caregivers).
- Hospice services.

Some may qualify for **VA Aid & Attendance**, a special monthly payment that helps pay for long-term care.

Contact the VA or your local Area Agency on Aging to learn more.



Technical assistance means using **tools or devices** to help someone stay safe, independent, or connected. These tools can be especially helpful for people with memory problems, dementia, or other health issues.

These devices **do not treat the condition**, but they **make daily life easier** for both the person and the caregiver.

1. Project Lifesaver

A **bracelet with a tracking device** to help find someone if they wander or get lost.

- Worn on the wrist or ankle.
- Police or rescue teams can track the person if they go missing.
- Available in many areas for free or low cost.

2. Memory-Friendly Communication

A **simple phone or watch** for people with memory problems.

- Has big buttons and easy-to-use features.
- Caregivers can call or send reminders.
- Helps with taking medicine and staying connected.

3. Medication Dispensers

Automatic machines that **give medicine at the right time**.

- Can sound alarms or flashlights.
- Some even call or text the caregiver if medicine is missed.

4. Door and Bed Alarms

These alarms alert a caregiver when a **door is opened**, or **someone gets out of bed**.

- Helps prevent wandering at night.
- Gives peace of mind when the caregiver is in another room.

5. GPS Trackers

Small devices placed in **shoes, pockets, or bags**.

- Use GPS to track someone's location.
- Helpful for people who go out alone but may get confused.

How to Get Technical Assistance Devices

- **Ask your local Area Agency on Aging** or senior services office.
- **Some programs offer devices for free** or at a discount.
- **Check with your doctor or insurance provider** to see if costs are covered.



What Is Dementia Friendly Alabama?

Dementia Friendly Alabama is a program that helps **make communities better for people living with dementia** and the people who care for them. It teaches people how to be kind, patient, and helpful to those with memory loss.

This program brings together businesses, churches, health workers, and community members to create a **safe and supportive place for everyone**.

Why It Matters

When a community is dementia-friendly:

- People with dementia can **stay active and feel included**.
- Caregivers feel **less alone and more supported**.
- Everyday places become **easier and safer to use**.

Who Leads the Program?

The **Central Alabama Aging Consortium (CAAC)** leads Dementia Friendly Alabama. CAAC is the Area Agency on Aging for Central Alabama and works with other groups across the state to:

- Train caregivers and professionals.
- Create memory-friendly resources.
- Support local communities and events.

How Alabama Is Becoming More Dementia Friendly

Across the state, Dementia Friendly Alabama and its AAA partners offer programs to help people learn, connect, and feel supported.

Education & Awareness

- **Free online trainings** for caregivers.
- **CEU trainings** for professionals and family caregivers.

- **Virtual Dementia Tours** – helps people understand what dementia feels like.
- **Dementia-Friendly Business and School Education**.
- **Training for law enforcement and first responders**.
- **Speaking events** and public awareness campaigns.

Tools & Support

- **Dementia Resource Guide** – local contacts and helpful services.
- **Memory Screenings** – quick checkups for memory changes.
- **Project Lifesaver & tracking tools** – for people who may wander.
- **Electronic pets** – comforting robotic animals that help with loneliness, stress, and agitation.

Connection & Community

- **Memory Cafés** – fun, friendly meetups for people with dementia and their caregivers.
- **Dementia Friendly Alabama Instagram & Facebook Page** – news, events, and tips.
- **Local dementia-friendly community groups**.

How You Can Help

You can make a difference in your community:

- **Talk to your local Area Agency on Aging** about dementia-friendly efforts.
- **Follow the Dementia Friendly Alabama Facebook page and Instagram** for updates.
- **Ask your school, church, or workplace** to become dementia friendly.
- **Become a “Dementia Friend”** by taking a short training.

Remember: A dementia-friendly community respects, includes, and supports people living with memory loss—because everyone deserves to feel safe and valued.

HELPFUL RESOURCES DIRECTORY

These trusted groups and websites can help you get answers, support, and services for dementia care.

Contact	Phone Number/Website
AARP	1-866-542-8167 • www.aarp.org
Aging and Disability Resource Center	1-800-243-5463 • www.alabamaageline.gov
Alabama Department of Human Resources	Adult/Elder Abuse Hotline: 1-800-458-7214 www.dhr.alabama.gov
Alabama Department of Insurance	1-800-433-3966 • (334)241-4141 (334)241-4141 • www.aldoi.gov
Alabama Department of Mental Health	1-800-367-0955 • (334)242-3454 www.mh.alabama.gov
Alabama Department of Public Health	1-800-252-1818 • www.alabamapublichealth.gov
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs	(334)242-5077 • www.va.alabama.gov
Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program	1-800-826-1675 • (205)348-4928 www.sites.ua.edu/adap/
Alabama Family Trust	1-833-881-8333 • (205)883-8333 www.alabamafamilytrust.com
Alabama Head Injury Foundation	1-800-433-8002 • (205)823-3818 • www.ahif.org
Alabama Lifespan Respite	1-866-RESTALA • (256)859-8300 www.alabamarespite.org
Alabama Medicaid	1-800-362-1504 • www.medicaidalabama.gov
Alabama Nursing Home Association	(334)271-6214 • www.anha.org
Alabama Securities Commission	1-800-222-1253 • (334)242-2984 www.asc.alabama.gov
Alzheimer's Association	24/7 Helpline: 1-800-272-3900 • www.alz.org
Alzheimer's of Central Alabama (ACA)	1-866-806-7255 • (205)871-7970 • www.alzca.org
Alzheimer's Education, Resources, & Services (AERS)	(334)233-2139 • www.alzheimersers.org
Alzheimer's Foundation of America	Helpline: 1-866-232-8484 • www.alzfdn.org
Alzheimer's Speaks	www.alzheimersspeaks.com
American Society on Aging	1-800-537-9728 • www.asaging.org
Area Agency on Aging	1-800-243-5463 • www.alabamaageline.gov
Assisted Living Association of Alabama	(334)262-5523 • www.alaaweb.org/
Assisted Living Facility Complaints	1-866-873-0366 • ALFComplaints@adph.state.al.us
Attorney General's Office	1-800-392-5658 • www.alabamaag.gov
Caregiver Assistance	1-800-243-5463 Caregiver Assistance – Alabama Department of Senior Services
Caregiving.com	www.caregiving.com
Dementia Careblazers	www.careblazers.com
Dementia Friendly Alabama	(334)240-4680 • www.dementiafriendlyal.org
Dementia Society of America	www.dementiasociety.org
Domestic Violence Hotline	1-800-650-6522

Contact	Phone Number/Website
Eldercare Locator	1-800-677-1116 • www.eldercare.acl.gov
Elderly Nutrition Program	1-800-243-5463 Elderly Nutrition Program – Alabama Department of Senior Services
Family Caregiver Alliance	1-800-445-8106 • www.caregiver.org
Gulf Coast Dementia Services (Baldwin, Escambia, & Mobile)	(251)355-9123 • www.gulfcoastdementiaservices.com
Home Health or Hospice Agency Complaints	1-800-356-9596 • ACCComplaints@adph.state.al.us
Legal Services of Alabama	1-866-456-4995 • www.legalservicesalabama.org
Long-term Care Ombudsman	1-877-425-2243 • (334)242-5743 The Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program – Alabama Department of Senior Services
Medicaid Waiver Programs	1-800-243-5463 Medicaid Waiver Programs – Alabama Department of Senior Services Personal Choices – Alabama Department of Senior Services
MedicAlert Foundation (Wandering Assistance)	1-800-432-5378 • www.medicalert.org/alz
Medicare	1-800-633-4227 • www.medicare.gov
Medicare Fraud	1-800-243-5463 SMP – Alabama Department of Senior Services
National Alliance for Caregiving	(202)918-1013 • www.caregiving.org
National Alzheimer’s and Dementia Resource Center	www.nadrc.acl.gov
National Association for Home Care & Hospice	(202)547-7424 • www.allianceforcareathome.org
National Institute on Aging	1-800-222-2225 • www.nia.nih.gov/
National Resource Center for Engaging Older Adults	www.engagingolderadults.org
Nursing Home Complaints	1-800-356-9596 • NHComplaints@adph.state.al.us
Project Lifesaver (Tracking Device)	1-877-580-5433 • www.projectlifesaver.org
Senior Employment	1-800-243-5463 Senior Employment – Alabama Department of Senior Services
Senior Legal Assistance Program	1-800-243-5463 Legal Assistance – Alabama Department of Senior Services
SenioRX (Prescription Assistance)	1-800-243-5463 Prescription Drug Assistance – Alabama Department of Senior Services
Social Security	1-800-772-1213 • www.ssa.gov
State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)	1-800-243-5463 Medicare & Insurance Counseling – Alabama Department of Senior Services
The Alzheimer’s Store (Assistive Devices)	www.alzstore.com
The Senior List (Senior Recommendations)	www.theseniorlist.com

Contact	Phone Number/Website
UAB Alzheimer's Disease Center	Memory Clinic: (205)801-8986 www.uab.edu/medicine/alzheimers
Us Against Alzheimer's	www.usagainstalzheimers.org
U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	1-800-232-4636 • www.cdc.gov/alzheimers-dementia
WINGS (Legal Resources)	www.alabamawings.alacourt.gov

MY IMPORTANT NUMBERS:

Fill in the blanks with your local or personal contacts. Keep this in a safe, easy-to-find place.

Contact	Phone Number
Area Agency on Aging	
Local Pharmacy	
Local 24-Hour Pharmacy	
Local Sheriff's Office	
Emergency Contact (Family/Friend)	
Doctor or Clinic	
Home Health or Hospice Agency	
Local Hospital	
Legal Help (if needed)	

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Alabama Department of Senior Services
201 Monroe Street, Suite 350
Montgomery, Alabama 36104

1-800-AGELINE 1-800-243-5463

AlabamaAgeline.gov