Dementia

Dementia is the result of damage to parts of the brain that control memory, speech, and awareness. Changes in mood, personality, and habits may appear first. As time passes, people with dementia may get confused, not remember people, or not speak clearly. They may not be able to feed themselves or bathe on their own. They may wander off and be unable to find their way back home.

HOME CARE

- Make sure the person does not leave the house alone.
- Remove loose rugs, sharp items, car keys, or other dangers.
- Make sure there is enough lighting at night.
- Have someone watch how and when medicines are taken.
- Learn about local services and support groups.
- Mental and physical activity may help slow decline.
- Make a plan with family members and friends.
- Keep medical records up-to-date and in a safe place.
- **Only give medicine as directed by your doctor.**

GET HELP IF:

- His or her behavior changes. He or she:
  - Becomes moody.
  - Becomes aggressive.
  - Sees things that are not there.
- He or she has problems with balance, speech, or falling.
- Swallowing problems develop.

GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF:

- A fever of 102°F (38.9°C) develops.
- He or she becomes confused or confusion gets worse than usual.
- He or she becomes sleepy or sleepiness gets worse than usual.
- Sudden changes appear.
  - Weakness on one side of the body.
  - Slurred speech.
  - Drooping on one side of the face.
- The person will not eat, drink, or take medicine.

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