

## What types of things should we be recording?

Stardust

Asked July 21, 2025

I've been keeping a sort of "incident log" on Mom for the past six months or so. Things like falls, major episodes of confusion, her trying to leave, etc. Recently, I read something that mentioned keeping track of the little things like being confused about the day of the week, etc. Is there a rule of thumb here? What do doctors and LTC look for? For instance, this morning, she walked into my husband's office (thinking it was her bedroom), opened the closet door, and told him she was looking for her hairpins. Besides her going into the wrong room... she hasn't used hairpins in 50 years. Is that something worth noting? I'm just not sure how detailed I should be in my notes.

Alzheimer's & Dementia

Cognitive Decline

Dementia Behaviors

Family Caregiver

Memory Loss

Fawnby

Jul 21, 2025

Keep the log in a way that you can depend on it to jog your memory when you need to report the incidents. For instance, write: Mom went into H's office, thought it was her bedroom, and told him she was looking for hairpins. When you need to report, you read this first and then tell the doctor (or anyone) that she did this, and you can add that it was in the morning, and usually she's having a second cup of coffee at that time, but on this day she seemed confused, talked to herself for a bit, and then went upstairs. You thought she'd go to her room but she didn't, and husband was surprised that she was looking for hairpins because she hasn't used them for 50 years.

You may, as you read through your entries, realize that there's a pattern going on; her confusion is greater in the morning, and she's sleeping more in the afternoon, and why does doctor think that is?

Just an example of how you can use your notes.

Grandma1954

Jul 21, 2025

When my Husband was on Hospice I kept a daily diary/log of things I noticed that might be considered a decline for Hospice.

things like

weight loss, increased sleeping, eating more, eating less, being more confused as to location might be something to note.

It depends on how "independent" mom is.

If she has always (since the diagnosis) kept herself groomed then all of a sudden she stops.

If he was continent of bowel but not now, that is a decline. (common to be urine incontinent but still bowel continent)

Increased agitation. Make note of the time of day. (sundowning)

If mom was dressing herself but now can't, that is a decline

Withdrawing from people and activities. That is a decline.

Talking less, or not at all.

Trouble eating or drinking. Coughing , choking, pocketing food.

Anything that you notice that might be a decline make note of it. It may not mean anything now but in a month it might mean a lot.

[Kathryn41](#)

Jul 27, 2025

Our neurologist states that with all of the tests the real importance about caring for someone with dementia (in our situation, Alzheimers) is to see how much the disease progression impacts the activities of daily life. These are the key factors in monitoring and deciding how quickly or how much the disease is worsening.

So, perhaps you can use that criteria in deciding what to record or not record. Does her action or non-action indicate an impact on her ability to function on a daily basis. Your log can determine a pattern of remaining constant or declining and in what areas it is declining.

Good luck, I hope this helps.

[Pencarl](#)

Jul 28, 2025

Don't let the health issues be your only concern. My husband passed away two weeks ago. He never forgot me or the kids. I can hear him greet me every morning with a "Hi sweetheart" and telling me how much he loves me. I also caught him singing Softly and Tenderly. The words weren't perfect but they are a beautiful blessing to me. Record some precious memories.

[MiaMoor](#)

Jul 29, 2025

Pencarl, that is so beautiful.

I'm sorry for your loss and I hope that those lovely memories, whilst bringing pain will also bring you comfort.

Wishing you well.

[WilliamBillA1](#)

Jul 27, 2025

I have my 88 year old sister-in-law living with us. There have been several times when she was very confused. Asking when her dead husband would come to pick her up, asking where her dead mother was in the house, etc. These episodes have been a result of lack of sleep. When she gets enough sleep all is normal. Check your mom's sleeping patterns and try to make sure she doesn't stay up all night reading or looking at things. Sleeping during the day is also common. If you try to keep them awake, it can result in confusion episodes. As memory deteriorates, it is more common to revisit past life experiences that can still be remembered. That may have caused the hairpin incident. Good luck.

[Patathome01](#) Jul 27, 2025

Dementia? Your mother has memory loss and requires 24/7 supervision.

[Taarna](#)

Jul 27, 2025

Isolated incidents are not concerning - we all have them. However a pattern of behaviors, or incidents, ARE concerning. The only way to track a pattern is to start recording the small incidents of irregular behavior to find the pattern. When you see the pattern - maybe wandering at a certain time of day or increased confusion in the evening - then you should talk with the primary care provider.

[jwellsy](#)

Jul 28, 2025

Log your feelings. You count for something too in this equation. Your feelings about these little incidents could eventually lead to some John Prine type song lyrics.

[TiredSarah822](#)

Jul 27, 2025

I think that is definitely something to note, as you said she hasn't used hairpins in 50 yrs & didn't notice the difference between her bedroom & the office. Just my unofficial opinion.

[Jenny10](#)

Jul 27, 2025

You'll go insane if you try and log d writhing an elderly person does and says  
can you imagine someone doing that to you or I?  
if you notice your mother forgetful then she's forgetful  
it didn't have to be micro managed  
you may be well organised but it will send even the most organised person over the edge or those  
around you having to cope with the obsession  
if you have reason fir concern just tell doctor  
shes getting more forgetful  
shes having regular falls I'd like a review of her health and tablets please  
Good luck

[mom2mepil](#)

Aug 7, 2025

Recording incidents that concern the person who is caregiving is not necessarily an obsession. And it won't "drive the caregiver insane." Sometimes it is extremely therapeutic for the caregiver. It was for me. I certainly didn't write down every single thing my mom was doing, but the most concerning behaviors were noted. I did not share more than the necessary few things with her doctor. I kept the notes for myself so that I could monitor safety issues and keep track of reality vs. Mom's made-up world. Far from driving me insane, it helped me keep my own sanity. Now that Mom is safe in memory care, I no longer need to keep those notes, and I have shredded the journal.