

6 WAYS TO ADAPT HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES FOR SENIORS WITH DEMENTIA



Include seniors with Alzheimer's or dementia in holiday activities You want older adults living with [Alzheimer's disease](#) or [dementia](#) to feel included in the holiday festivities. But you also don't want them to get overstimulated or agitated. Whether you're hosting the get-together or taking them to someone's house, these 6 tips help you modify holiday activities for seniors with dementia so they'll be able to participate comfortably.

6 ways to adapt holiday activities for seniors with dementia **1.** ***Keep groups small to avoid overstimulation***

Too many people, too much noise, and a flurry of activity can easily overstimulate someone with Alzheimer's or dementia. Don't feel stuck with the usual traditions, make changes that will help your older adult stay calm and relaxed. For example, instead of hosting one big party for all of the extended family, have a couple of casual get-togethers with small groups of relatives spread over a couple of weeks. Or, limit the guest list to immediate family only.

2. Schedule important activities for their best time of day

There are times of day when your older adult is at their best. Choose the most meaningful holiday activities and schedule them for times when your older adult is most likely to participate successfully.

For example, if they get agitated in the evenings, have the holiday party earlier in the day. Or, if your older adult doesn't wake up until late morning, have the family gathering in the evening so they can stick to their regular schedule.

3. Set aside a private, quiet space and encourage one-on-one visits

Whether the holiday gathering is at your house or a relative's, it will be crowded and noisy. To avoid overstimulating your older adult, arrange for them to stay in a quiet room away from the group. Family members can take turns spending quality time with them in their calm space.

4. Plan activities they'll enjoy

To help your older adult feel included, plan activities they already enjoy. For example, if mom still loves to bake, organize a group cookie-making session. Or, if dad loves watching football,

have everyone watch a game together.

Another idea is to have fun with music – something that many [people with Alzheimer's and dementia really enjoy](#). You could have a family sing-a-long to your older adult's favorite tunes, ask the kids to sing traditional holiday songs, have a little dance party, or simply play the [songs they love](#).

5. Avoid big changes in diet

Many older adults have sensitive digestive systems. Even though holiday meals are filled with delicious treats, it might be better to limit foods that are too different from their ordinary diet. Rich foods could upset their stomach and alcohol can cause problems with many medications. Plus, having sugar or alcohol may cause some people with [dementia](#) to behave differently (and not in a good way).

6. Help children spend time with seniors

Holidays are a great opportunity for older adults to spend time with their grandkids, nieces, or nephews. Talking with children ahead of time about Alzheimer's or dementia helps them overcome fears and encourages them to spend time with your older adult.

Before the holiday visit, let kids know that odd behaviors or angry outbursts aren't their fault, but are a normal part of the disease. During the visit, have an adult keep an eye on the kids in case your older adult says or does something unexpected.

Bonus tip: Take a short break yourself

While family is around, take advantage of the opportunity and ask someone to take care of your older adult for an hour or two. Don't wait for someone to offer, they might not realize you need (and deserve!) a break.

Take a nap, take a long shower, watch some TV, call a friend...anything that helps you relax. Taking a break, no matter how brief, allows you to rest, recharge, and de-stress. After your well-deserved break, you'll be better able to help your older adult have the best holiday possible.

Recommended for you:

- [48 Amazing Gifts for Seniors with Alzheimer's or Dementia](#)
- [Prepare Family Before Holiday Visits with Seniors](#)
- [Self Care During the Holidays: 10 Stress Relief Tips for Caregivers](#)

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