How to make the home safe for a person with Alzheimer's disease

Do I have to worry about making changes in the home?

Every person with Alzheimer's disease or dementia is different. In the early stages of the disease, many affected people can be independent with some occasional support. As the condition gets worse, the person may have some safety concerns at home. Small changes in the home can make it safer and easier for the person with Alzheimer's disease.

What are some of the general home safety tips?

There are several recommendations that can help to protect a person with Alzheimer's disease. Some changes you can make to the home are listed in the table below.

Some tips to improve home safety	
Store away hazardous items	– Medications, alcohol, matches, sharp objects, small appliances and tools should be in a securely locked cabinet
Keep cleaning products out of sight or secured	– Keep liquid laundry packs, bleach and other cleaning supplies out of sight to prevent possible ingestion
Know the number for local poison control	– Consider putting the number for poison control beside the phone just in case of accidental ingestion
Remove tripping hazards	– Remove throw rugs – Remove or tape down extension cords – Remove excessive clutter
Lighting	– Keep rooms and hallways well lit
Secure large furniture	– Bolt and secure large furniture like bookshelves and cabinets to prevent tipping
Chairs with arms	– All chairs should have arms to provide support for the person when going from sitting to standing
Stickers on glass doors	– Add stickers to glass doors at eye level to help keep doors visible
Latch or deadbolt	– Install a latch or deadbolt on all doors; the latch should be either above or below eye-level
Remove interior locks	– Remove locks on interior doors to prevent the person from locking themselves in
Use colour to identify objects	– Use light switches and furniture that are a different colour than the walls to help identify them

What are some of the kitchen tips for people with dementia?

There are a few kitchen safety tips that can be used to protect a person with dementia:

— Use appliances with an auto shut-off feature
— Prevent unsafe stove usage by applying stove knob covers, removing knobs or turning off the gas when the stove is not in use
— Mark food with purchase date and regularly check and discard expired food
— Discard toxic plants and decorative fruit because they can be mistaken for real food

How do you keep the bathroom safe?

Experts recommend a few tips that can be used to help to keep the bathroom safe. These include:

— Use a coloured toilet seat
— Use a sign on the door to remind the person where the toilet is
— Use a plug that prevents flooding
— Remove the locks on the door or make sure they are familiar and easy to use
— Install grab bars for the shower, tub and toilet to provide additional support
— Adjust the temperature of the hot water tank to prevent scalding
— Apply textured stickers to slippery surfaces to prevent falls

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