Preparing for a doctor or pharmacy visit

Preparing for a doctor's visit

Most people with Alzheimer's disease will be seen by a family doctor or nurse practitioner to keep track of how the symptoms and behaviours are changing.

Caregivers can help to get the most out of these appointments by coming prepared. The table below reviews some key tips to get the most out of each of these appointments.

Doctor's appointment tips	
Plan ahead and come prepared	– Many people forget to ask their doctor all the questions that they have – Writing down questions or concerns before the appointment can help – Bring the list of questions to the doctor's office – If the doctor can't answer all the questions, he or she can be reminded to answer them at the next appointment
Share details and changes	– Caregivers should keep notes about changes in behaviours, routines or eating habits – Be as specific as possible (such as when did they occur, how often does it occur and if there are things that trigger it)
Bring all medications or an up-to-date list	– Many people with Alzheimer's disease will see several doctors for multiple conditions – It is important to have a complete list of every medication, over-the-counter drug and vitamin or herbal supplement the person takes – Your pharmacist can help by providing you with an up-to-date medication list
Consider making a care log	– Some caregivers keep a daily log to track changes in health, mood, memory, and behaviour – This can be very helpful too, if the doctor has questions about when symptoms started or changed
Take notes during the appointment	– Taking notes can help you remember the answers to questions asked – Having the caregiver, friend or family member with the person at the appointment can help for note taking
Ask about things to change	– Many times, doctors can provide a list of things that the person should do after the appointment – Small changes can often make a big difference in people with Alzheimer's disease
Stay in contact with your doctor	– People with Alzheimer's disease should see their doctor at least once a year – They should also see them if there are rapid changes in symptoms (such as more confused or agitated), if they are feeling unwell or if the people caring for them are concerned – It is important to know that conditions such as a chest or bladder infection, constipation or pain can make the person seem more confused or distressed

Talking to your pharmacist

Caregivers should consider looking for a caregiver-friendly pharmacy. Pharmacists at these locations have undergone special training to help you and the person you are caring for. These pharmacies can provide you with services that can help with caring for the person with Alzheimer's disease. The table below lists some of the services that caregiver-friendly pharmacies can provide you.

Tips for caring for a person with Alzheimer's disease	
Caregiver support	– These pharmacies are not only there to help the person with Alzheimer's disease, but also to provide you with the support you need – Pharmacists realize that you may have questions and are there to answer everything they can – They can also provide you with products and service that can make providing care easier – They can help with managing any health issues that you may have while caring for someone with Alzheimer's disease
Medication support	– Caregiver-friendly pharmacies have services such as blister packaging, easier to open bottles, and counselling that can make it easier to give medications to a person with Alzheimer's disease – If you are confused about any medication or would like any help with medications, talk to your pharmacist
Medication reviews	– These pharmacists can sit down with you and the person with Alzheimer's disease to review each of the medications, what they do, how to take them and possible side effects – They provide an up-to-date medication list that can be shared with your doctor – These medication reviews are normally done once a year to keep the medication list up-to-date and to answer any new questions you may have
Products you need	– People with Alzheimer's disease will commonly need things such as bed pads, adult briefs, mobility aids and over-the-counter products to help with conditions such as constipation, a common cold or other simple conditions
Services you need	– Many of the caregiver-friendly pharmacies offer delivery services, automated refills, and caregiver support – Ask your caregiver-friendly pharmacy what services they offer to help with caring for a person with Alzheimer's disease

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