

UW Health: Geriatricians offer tips for dementia care during COVID-19

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MADISON, Wis. - Geriatricians at UW Health want the community to know patients with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are vulnerable to complications associated with COVID-19 and there are steps caregivers can take during this global pandemic to assist with health and safety.

- People over the age of 65 and people who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility are at high risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Remember the basics for disease prevention - stay home if possible, wash hands often, avoid crowds, wear a facemask when in public spaces, avoid touching your face and physical distance.
- Months of physical distancing can increase feelings of isolation and loneliness, especially in older adults. It is important to stay connected with others in creative ways, and to balance the risk of COVID-19 with the risk of isolation.
- Older adults should only commit to social interactions in low-risk situations, where they can reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection but still interact with people - remind your visitors to stay home if they feel ill, meet in small groups, meet outside in a park or in your yard, and try to see the same "pod" of people.
- Developing daily routines, staying physically and mentally active, and avoiding unhealthy foods are ways to cope with the changes caused by COVID-19 and build resilience.

Caregivers should also take particular care of themselves during this time. While monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms in those they care for, caregivers should also be monitoring and managing their own health and mental wellbeing.

Interviews are available upon request.