Contact: Sarah Seeger, Development Director, Alzheimer’s Association Greater Wisconsin Chapter  
Phone: 920-469-2110,  
Email: sseeger@alz.org  
Website: www.alz.org/gwwi

For Immediate Release: Holiday Tips for Families Affected by Alzheimer’s

Green Bay, December 11, 2018 – Holiday celebrations are often joyous occasions that families look forward to all year, but they can be challenging for the millions of people living with Alzheimer’s disease and dementia, according to the Alzheimer’s Association. Alzheimer’s disease affects an estimated 5.7 million people in the U.S., and more than nearly 16 million people care for someone with the disease.

The hustle and bustle that accompanies the holidays can be stressful for people living with Alzheimer’s,” said Kate Kahles, outreach specialist, Alzheimer’s Association Greater Wisconsin chapter. “Changes in the daily routine, large gatherings and noisy environments — all holiday hallmarks — can create extra anxiety for someone living with dementia.”

To help families navigate holiday-related challenges, the Alzheimer’s Association is offering these simple tips to ensure an enjoyable holiday for all.

Prepare Your Guests: The holidays are full of emotions, so let guests know what to expect before they arrive and tell them how they can help. Suggest activities to engage the person with Alzheimer’s or best ways to communicate with them. “Cross talk or simultaneous conversations can be challenging for people living with Alzheimer’s, so try engaging them one-on-one or in smaller group settings,” Kahles advises.

Build on traditions and memories: Take time to experiment with new traditions that might be less stressful or a better fit with your caregiving responsibilities. If evening confusion and agitation are a problem, turn your holiday dinner into a holiday lunch or brunch.

Involves the person living with Alzheimer’s: Depending on abilities and preferences, make sure to keep the person with Alzheimer’s involved in the celebrations, such as packing cookies in tins or helping wrap gifts.

Plan ahead: When attending a holiday party, prepare the host for special needs, such as a quiet room for the person to rest when they get tired, away from the noise and distractions.

Adapt gift giving to ensure safe and useful gifts: Diminishing capacity may make some gifts unusable or even dangerous to a person with dementia. If someone asks for gift ideas, suggest items people living with the disease can easily enjoy, such as comfortable clothing, favorite music, videos and photo albums.

More holiday tips can be found by visiting the Alzheimer’s Association website. The Alzheimer’s Association 24/7 Helpline also provides reliable information and support to all those who need assistance. Call the helpline toll-free anytime, even holidays, at 1.800.272.3900.

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About the Alzheimer’s Association

The Alzheimer’s Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer’s care, support and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer’s disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer’s”. Visit alz.org or call 800.272.3900.