

FOR ALZHEIMER'S CAREGIVERS: SUNDOWNERS SYNDROME

For those caring for loved ones with Alzheimer's Disease, each day can bring new challenges. An associated condition to be aware of is called 'Sundowner's Syndrome'.

What is Sundowner's Syndrome?

*WebMD has cited that 1 out of 5 people in need of Alzheimer's care suffer from Sundowner's Syndrome. The cause is unknown, however for those afflicted, a change in behavior, personality or temperament occurs in the late afternoon/early evening hours of the day; essentially when day transitions to night.

Some experts believe that the part of the brain that regulates the inner body clock is disrupted causing confusion about sleep and wakefulness. This can result in a loved one becoming restless or agitated with severe mood swings. Sometimes, they may exhibit loud outbursts, pacing and hearing or seeing things that do not exist. The duration can vary from a short time to progressively worsening over an entire evening.

Managing the condition requires setting calming routines, practicing good sleep habits and being aware of any environmental or nutritional triggers.

*source: Webmd.com

Living with Alzheimer's can be a challenge, even with professional assistance. As a caregiver, practice patience, empathy and close observance of a loved one's behavior triggers.

How do you manage Sundowner's Syndrome?

NOTICE

- Too much stimuli can be overwhelming and confusing. Identify behavior triggers like household activities at certain times of day, visitors, doors opening/closing, etc.
- Be aware of possible food stimulation like caffeine, sugar or alcohol.

CALMING

- Try calming techniques with routine activities, like playing music or television programs they enjoy.
- *Read to them* to help avoid frustrations. Sometimes reading comprehension is a challenge and listening to the spoken word can be calming.

ROUTINE

- Use bright lights in the room during the day and maintain a daytime glow until bedtime.
- Encourage a restful night's sleep with a welcoming, serene sleep environment.

CONFIRM

- Always consult with a doctor about any natural supplements or prescription medication for anxiety or depression.
- Confirm there is no interference possibility with prescribed medications in combination with over-the-counter.



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18950 N. Dale Mabry Hwy | Lutz Fl 33548 | 813-263-6735 | jaimesadc@yahoo.com