

FOR ALZHEIMER'S CAREGIVERS: TO TRAVEL OR NOT TO TRAVEL



From the Desk of Jaime Goddard-Stern, BSN

According to some economic experts, 2024 set a record as the busiest Thanksgiving ever at US airports. AAA estimated more than 3 million traveled thought airports across America. Some projections called for 2025 to see even more travelers.

Car travel in 2024 was even busier - an estimated 71 million people hit the roads last year! Holiday travel is stressful before you even leave home. Factor in a loved one with dementia and the stress may feel overwhelming. So the question is - to travel or not to travel with your loved one?

Many people feel obligated to include loved ones in all holiday plans. However, this may not be ideal. Think about your loved one's prior holiday routines. If your loved one never traveled, you may not want to start now. In addition, most people with dementia do better with routine and the holidays can be anything but. So, if you travel without your loved one, do not feel guilty!

There are respite options that will help you and your loved one enjoy the holidays to their fullest.

If you do decide to travel for the holidays, be prepared for some extra planning. Here are some tips ensure a smoother travel experience for everyone in your party.

Travel tips

1. Do not overload your loved one with too much information. Certainly keep your loved one informed but no need to provide too many details, as this can be overwhelming.
2. Avoid peak travel times and be mindful of times when your loved one is at his/her best.
3. Consider accessibility accommodations. Request a wheelchair even if your loved one does not have mobility issues. Airports will be very busy and maneuvering through them can be very confusing.
4. Do not schedule connecting flights. If that is not feasible, make sure there is plenty of time in between flights. Additionally, don't forget accommodations for those connecting flights.
5. Pack basic medical information and plenty of medications.
6. Don't schedule too many events for your loved one and allow time for rest throughout the trip.
7. When driving, be sure to map out stops so everyone in the car can get well needed breaks.
8. Contemplate traveling on off days - for example, Thanksgiving day is generally a quiet day for travel whereas the Sunday after Thanksgiving is the single busiest day of the year for air and car travel.



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