



Thursday 8 August 2019

Walking safely this National Missing Persons Week

A new resource to assist people living with dementia to walk safely and maintain their independence is now available from Dementia Australia.

The 'Walking Safely with Dementia' resource is being launched to coincide with National Missing Persons Week, which runs from 4-10 August 2019.

According to a study from the US Alzheimer's Association¹, it is estimated that 60 per cent of people with Alzheimer's disease (the most common form of dementia) will become lost at least once and becoming lost is often the first symptom experienced by someone living with dementia.

The 'Walking Safely with Dementia' guide offers information, tips and strategies for people living with dementia, their families and carers and suggests ways we, as a community, can help if a person becomes lost or disorientated.

Dementia Australia CEO Ms Maree McCabe said that walking has many health benefits and should be supported for all people.

"There is no need to stop walking even once you have been diagnosed with dementia," Ms McCabe said.

"Regular walking is a great activity and delivers a wide range of benefits for our physical and mental health.

"Walking can also ensure people living with dementia retain a sense of physical independence and if walking with others, can ensure the person living with dementia remains socially included and connected."

A wide-cross section of people from across Australia were involved in the guide's development including Dementia Australia Dementia Advocates, which includes people living with dementia and carers.

To reflect the many unique situations that people living with dementia, their families and carers may face, the guide outlines a number of strategies including:

- keeping a daily routine with familiar walking routes which avoid busy or noisy places;
- creating a 'circle of support' such as walking group or people who are notified if the person is going for a walk; and
- carrying identification such as a Dementia Australia ID card or an engraved ID bracelet.

The 'Walking Safety with Dementia' guide also provides information and tips for the general public if they meet someone who is lost.

The guide can be found on our website at: <https://www.dementia.org.au/resources/walking-safely-with-dementia>

Dementia Australia is the national peak body and charity for people, of all ages, living with all forms of dementia, their families and carers. It provides advocacy, support services, education and information. An estimated 447,000 people have dementia in Australia. This number is projected to reach almost 1.1 million by 2058. Dementia Australia is the new voice of Alzheimer's Australia. Dementia Australia's services are supported by the Australian Government.

National Dementia Helpline 1800 100 500

Interpreter service available

(The National Dementia Helpline is an Australian Government Initiative)

Dementia is a National Health Priority Area

www.dementia.org.au

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When talking or writing about dementia please refer to [Dementia Language Guidelines](#).

¹ Alzheimer's Association (n.d) Wandering. Retrieved March 14, 2019, from: <https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/stages-behaviors/wandering>