


Epoch Pandemic Series


I.

Epoch Pandemic Series:



**DEMENTIA MANAGEMENT
DURING COVID-19**


PRACTICAL TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS



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II.

Epoch Pandemic Series:



**IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL HEALTH
DURING THE PANDEMIC**


Managing Stress & Anxiety



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III.

Epoch Pandemic Series:



**EPOCH DURING
THE PANDEMIC**
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WE ARE PREPARED

**COVID-19
PROTOCOLS**



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— “ —

The key to overcome crisis is patience,
courage, self-discipline, adaptation and alertness.

— ” —

About Epoch Elder Care

Epoch Elder Care is India's expert in Dementia and Assisted Living. Epoch Assisted Living Homes provide holistic, Person Centered Care that enables elders to have the highest quality of life. At Epoch, the team believes in focusing on the person as much as the clinical condition.

Epoch offers assisted living, dementia care, skilled nursing care, palliative care to elders in need of 24x7 care and assistance. They normalise the life of elders with chronic conditions, using Person-Centered Care, whilst focusing on overall well-being and happiness. Epoch has more than 8 years of relevant experience in India, and follows evidence-based global best practices. Currently, Epoch operates 3 homes in India - Vermeer House and Frida House in Gurgaon, Monet House in Pune, and will be expanding the services soon.

Epoch Elder Care is helmed by Neha Sinha, a dementia specialist, clinical psychologist and trained in palliative care philosophy from Stockholm (Sweden). She has gained international recognition for creating dementia services in India. Epoch Homes are managed under the expertise of registered senior nurses trained in elder and dementia care.

Epoch is a specialist trusted by families for the care of their elderly loved ones.

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About the series

Caring for the elderly is always challenging, and due to the novel coronavirus COVID-19, it can be even more stressful and confusing; given the unknowns and the ever-changing situation.

At Epoch Elder Care, we have in-depth insights and experience in managing the elders. We have developed the 'Epoch Pandemic Series', with an aim to offer practical suggestions, on the management of the COVID-19 for the elderly including those with dementia. This series can be a ready-reckoner guide for the caregivers, and Senior Care Homes. This compilation of 3 e-booklets includes suggestions on the physical and mental health of both the elderly and the caregiver; and also has protocols on managing an Assisted Living Home

Dementia management during COVID-19: Practical tips for caregivers



This booklet recognises the increased struggle of caregivers in dementia management during the pandemic. These simple, day-to-day practical tips will help in normalising, as far as possible, the physical and mental health of your elderly loved ones during the lockdown. This booklet can be a mini guide for caregivers at home, in caring for elderly with dementia, during novel coronavirus COVID-19.

Importance of mental health during the pandemic: Managing stress & anxiety

The stress and anxiety during COVID-19 can be overwhelming. This booklet deals with the mental health of both the elders and caregivers during this pandemic. It addresses the adverse effects in mental health of elders and caregivers due to novel coronavirus COVID-19, with suggestions on how to manage not only caregiver burnout, but also increase emotional bonding with the elderly.



Epoch during the pandemic: COVID-19 Protocols

Given the nature of novel coronavirus COVID-19, Senior Care Homes need to ensure special care and safety for its elderly residents. We, at Epoch Elder Care, as experts in Assisted Living and Dementia Care, have thoughtfully developed protocols for our Homes, to help us be best prepared in tackling this unprecedented health issue. The safety and well-being of our residents, including those with dementia, and the Epoch team are always, and will continue to be, of paramount importance to us. These protocols can help in guiding an Assisted Living Home in this current fluid situation of the novel coronavirus COVID-19.



Epoch Pandemic Series:



DEMENTIA MANAGEMENT DURING COVID-19

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS

About dementia

What is dementia?

Dementia occurs as a result of a disease process that increasingly damages the brain over time. Signs and symptoms of dementia result when once-healthy neurons (nerve cells) in the brain stop working, lose connections with other brain cells, and die. While everyone loses some neurons as they age, people with dementia experience far greater loss.

Dementia is a syndrome (usually of a chronic or progressive nature) in which there is deterioration of cognitive functioning (thinking, remembering, and reasoning) and behavioral abilities. This loss is to such an extent that it interferes with a person's daily life and activities. These functions include memory, language skills, visual perception, problem solving, self-management, and the ability to focus and pay attention. The impairment in cognitive function is commonly accompanied, and occasionally preceded, by deterioration in social behaviour, motivation or emotional control, and their personalities may change. These difficulties occur because nerve cells (neurons) in parts of the brain involved in cognitive function have been damaged or destroyed. Consciousness is not affected.

While dementia is more common as people grow older (up to half of all people age 85 or older may have some form of dementia), it is not a normal part of aging. Many people live into their 90s and beyond without any signs of dementia. Dementia is one of the major causes of disability and dependency among older people worldwide.

What causes dementia?

Dementia is caused by a number of diseases which destroy nerve cells and damage the brain. Various disorders and factors contribute to the development of dementia. Neurodegenerative disorders result in a progressive and irreversible loss of neurons and brain functioning.

DEMENTIA



A public health priority

What are the symptoms?

Difficulties with everyday tasks

Confusion in familiar environments

Difficulty with words and numbers

Memory loss

Changes in mood and behaviour



Who is affected?

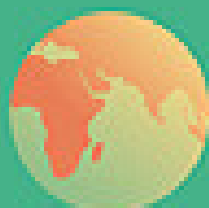


Nearly 10 million new cases every year

One every 3 seconds

50 million people worldwide

Set to triple by 2050



Majority of people who will develop dementia will be in low- and middle-income countries

What is the cause?

Conditions that affect the brain, such as Alzheimer's disease, stroke or head injury



What does it cost?

2015



US\$818 billion: estimated costs to society in 2015

2030



US\$2 trillion



Families and friends provide most of the care

Carers experience physical, emotional and financial stress



Caring for your elderly loved one with dementia is always challenging, and due to the COVID-19 situation, it can be even more stressful.

This booklet gives you simple, practical tips that will help you as a caregiver, in dementia management during this lockdown. Day-to-day issues such as implementing COVID-19 precautionary measures, regular routine & schedule, increasing emotional engagement, chronicling life events and managing mealtimes have been covered in this booklet.

It is a mini guide to help you manage your loved one during this pandemic.

- Neha Sinha, CEO

Ensuring implementation of precautionary measures



Your loved one with dementia might have difficulties in remembering COVID-19 safeguard procedures. In-fact they may get confused with all the new information surrounding this new virus. It is important to always have a suitable explanation for what you are doing, why you are doing and we suggest keeping it simple.

Few simple tips to enforce these precautionary measures without complicating life for them:

Washing their hands with soap and water

You could show how them a small dirt mark on their hands, and convince them to wash their hand. Use a sanitizer if you can't find an explanation to wash hands each time. Do this periodically, since they will not remember.



Not to touch their face

Try telling them their face will get dirty. Keep their hands occupied in other stuff and distract them.

Keep 1-2 feet distance

Try telling a family member has a 'bad cold', hence is not coming closer.

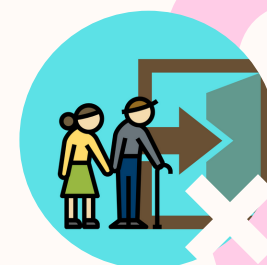


Cover nose and mouth whilst sneezing/coughing

You could say "you will catch their cold, if handkerchief/tissue is not used."

Not able to go out of home

Try coming up with a practical problem like the car is not working, taxi is not available, shops are closed.



Not able to go for a walk

Find a reasonable excuse like it is too hot, parks are closed, you are unwell.





Importance of a regular routine and schedule

Do not undermine the relevance of maintaining a routine for someone with dementia especially in their homes. During this pandemic, it is important for you to ensure that there is least possible schedule disruption along with managing your own life.

Few simple tips to keep in mind:



Pace out your physical interactions with them

They will get confused on seeing you so often at home, due to the lockdown. Make a time schedule, do not over interact in a manner where your absence later can be difficult to adjust to.

Manage disruptions in schedule

Find a suitable explanation for the disruption of their schedule such as their regular walk or interaction with other people, since it may lead to behavioral challenges or agitation



Don't confuse them with information on the pandemic

Protect them from the overload of news. Switch TV channels to non COVID-19 related viewing. Avoid unnecessary anxiety.



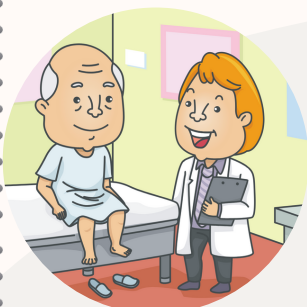
Ensure regular schedule for daily activities

Dealing with change is always difficult for your family member with dementia. Try and minimize changes especially if they are going to be temporary as much as possible. Do not change timings of meals, medicines, sleep times and hygiene routine.



Maintain doctor check-up schedules

Don't skip scheduled reviews esp neurologist and psychiatrist consultations. and schedule appointments through video or telephone.



Increasing emotional engagement with creative activities



This period of lockdown is a great opportunity to bond with our loved ones with dementia. It is also a great way to introduce stimulation in a structured manner.

Few simple tips that you can do together:

Activities involving music



Music therapy and musical activities are one of the most popular ways of engagement in dementia. Sing old songs to stimulate long term memory, play old videos, use soothing music during evenings or shower times to avoid onset of agitation.



Play simple games which they have been used to

Carrom, ludo, snakes & ladder, cards, block games, puzzles

Engage them with art



Introduce making birthday cards or season's greetings for family.



Explore easy craft projects

Making paper cups, party caps, scrap book, origami, paper boats- these are all excellent activities for hand-eye coordination.

Sorting and matching activities



Great for concentration and distraction. Sort and match colourful picture cards, UNO cards, blocks, poker chips.

Wash/sanitise their and your hands before and after each activity and maintain social distancing if more than one person.



Using household activities for engagement

Since everyone is at home together, it is a great time to use simple household chores to engage in purposeful activities which could also be incorporated in the routine of your family member with dementia, post the lockdown

Few simple tips that you can do together:

Engage with them in simple structured household activities, that help your family member feel a sense of accomplishment

Simple kitchen activities

Dig out old recipes that they loved, make chappati dough, whip cream for a cake, shell pea pods, separate dals and grains, make a smoothie or an evening drink



Household activities

Dusting book shelves or large corners, laying the table for a meal, folding clothes, making the bed, placing things back in cupboard

Introduce or encourage gardening

Tending to plants can be very therapeutic. Pot a plant and watch it grow, water plants every evening, create a kitchen garden



Children and pets

Encouraging involvement with children or pets, both have a huge increase in feelings of positive engagement and fulfillment.

Wash/sanitise their and your hands before and after each activity and maintain social distancing if more than one person.



Chronicling life events and stimulating long term memory

Dementia affects current or short term memory but older memories remain intact for a longer period. When your dear one is in the mild or moderate stages of dementia, you can use this period to document the fading memories of your loved one's life. It is a great way to capture information that can be used to engage them later on, as the disease progresses.

Ideas to engage using long term memory:

Learn and record grandma's secret recipes

Jog her memory for all her favourite recipes and create a recipe book. You can also create a food blog in her name and save it for future generations!



Explore old photo albums together

Document the stories around the photos and key events in their lives, prompt them while they are trying to remember so they don't stress out.



Watch videos of family events and festivals

Ask them to relate their feelings during these festive occasions and capture the traditions they followed in specific festivals. You can also make a YouTube video of your parents.



Listen to old music with grandpa

Write down stories of his life related to each of the songs, rekindle old memories with music.

Create a biography

Chronicle their life from when they were born to date, capture iconic moments (avoid if any traumatic memories involved) like the partition, Independence day, Indo-Pak war, Emergency.



Managing mealtimes for persons with dementia - I

For a family member, managing meals with a loved one who has dementia, can become an ordeal. These persons may forget eating, or resist eating, or get agitated whilst having their meals.

Few simple tips that you could follow during meal time, regularly, and when you are at home during this pandemic lockdown:

Serve meals in quiet surroundings

No hustle-bustle or distractions that may cause irritation.



Do not hurry them during meals. Give them all the time they need.

Have patience and lots of it

Table mats, tablecloth and plate should preferably be in solid colours and contrasting, so the person doesn't get confused and food can be distinguished easily.

Keep the table layout simple



Discuss diet with the physician

Diets will typically be based on the overall medical condition of the person.

There are lots of recommended diets for better neurological health- check with the neurologist before starting anything specific.



Use one 'single-utensil' set, made of food-grade plastic

Use utensils that are simple and easy- single bowl, single all purpose spoon. Vessels should not have sharp edges.



Will help avoid any mishaps.

Keep hot surfaces away from the person



Managing mealtimes for persons with dementia - II

To ensure that your family member with dementia eats well, it is important to serve the right kind of food, in the right way.

Few additional simple tips that you could follow during meal time, regularly, and when you are at home during this pandemic:

Small meals across the day

Be prepared, since a person with dementia may forget that they have taken their meals and may ask for food repeatedly.



Observe their meal patterns and make changes accordingly.

Servings

Give them approximately, serving portion of 150g of veggies or 180-200 g of non-veg per serving.

Since they may have chewing or dental issues, make sure food like peas, peanuts etc. are well cooked.

Very well cooked food



Hydration



One of the most common causes of comorbidities like UTI or headaches is because of dehydration also resulting in agitated behaviour.

Offer them sips of plain or flavoured water throughout the day.

Moderate temperature of food and liquid

Since the person may lack the judgement of when to bite into their food, do not serve hot food or boiling hot liquids such as soup or dals.



Build immunity

In this period of pandemic, build their immunity with herbs and condiments such as ginger, garlic, jeera, turmeric etc.

COVID-19 : INFORMATION SOURCES & CONTACT INFORMATION

WEBSITES

- Ministry of Health & Family Welfare - www.mohfw.gov.in
- MyGov (Government of India) - www.mygov.in
- World Health Organisation - www.who.int
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - www.cdc.gov

PHONE NUMBERS (INDIA)

- Ministry of Health & Family Welfare: **+91 11 23978046**
- Ministry of Health & Family Welfare: **1075**
- MoHFW Psycho-Social toll free helpline: **080 46110007**

WHATSAPP

- MyGov CORONA Helpdesk: **+91 901 315 1515**
- World health Organization: **+41 79 893 18 92**

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COVID-19 TRACKER

Aarogya Setu App on Google Play Store and Apple Store