



Going on a trip with a senior who needs special care is not much different from traveling with a young child. Your responsibility is the safety and comfort of the senior, as well as consideration for other travelers.

Some thoughtful tips could help make the journey go more smoothly. The result will be a pleasant experience for everyone involved, including the Alzheimer's patient.

First, have a thorough discussion with the family doctor and/or involved medical specialist on aging. State your plans and request information to cover all aspects of the trip. If the doctor believes it will be too difficult or dangerous for the patient, and recommends cancelling, the decision may be best for all concerned.

Once the trip is scheduled, pack all the required medical needs. For each medication, take an adequate supply for the planned duration of the trip, plus an extra week's amount in case of delays.

If the patient may become incontinent, take appropriate single-use personal toilet and cleaning

supplies. You'll also need doctor-signed prescription forms with you for possible inspection at airports and border crossings. Keep copies ready to show for unexpected security stops.

Other than in fast food shops, before you dine with the patient during the trip, call ahead to restaurant management. On cruises and resort visits, explain what you'll require, such as wheelchair access and, if necessary, a quiet section away from other diners. It may be convenient to scan the menu online and send in your order before arriving.

If the elderly person becomes distressed or impatient, go to an isolated area of the restaurant or to a restroom for some quiet time. It's not only consideration and courtesy for other diners. It also offers time to groom and keep the elderly person calm, clean and comfortable.

When traveling in a city for the first time with an affected elderly companion, contact a local Alzheimer's service agency there for help and suggestions. For more info, go to alz.org