

When a person with dementia goes missing, you or the caregiver should: -

- Remain calm.
- Make a thorough search of the house and familiar places.
- Try to remember what he/she was wearing.
- Walk or drive around the vicinity and/or to any places he/she may visit regularly. Have someone to stay at home in case he/she returns home or to answer any phone calls.
- Contact the police if immediate searches yield no result. Tell them the person has dementia and any concerns you have for their safety.

When he/she returns home:

- Notify the police immediately.
- Do not scold or show any anxiety as this may confuse or frighten them.
- Provide reassurance and get back into their regular routines as quickly as possible.



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For appointments and enquiries,
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CGH Appointment Centre operating hours:
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Managing Wandering Behaviour in Dementia

The **a b c**'s of Health

 Changi General Hospital

Wandering is common among persons with dementia due to:-

Memory loss

- The person may set off to the shop and forgets where he/she is going or why.

Searching for familiar persons/ items/ place

- The person may wander off in search for someone or something relating to their past when he/she becomes confused.



Expressing boredom or anxiety

- The person may find it hard to concentrate as dementia progresses; hence, wandering is a way to keep themselves occupied.

Confusing night with day

- The person may suffer from sleep problems, or wake in the early hours and become disoriented. He/she may think it is daytime and decide to go for a walk.

Continuing a previous habit

- The person who is used to walking long distances may simply wish to continue to do so.

Physical discomfort or pain

- The person may walk to ease discomfort that is caused by uncomfortable clothes, excessive heat or the need to go to the toilet.

Change of environment

- The person may feel uncertain and/or disoriented in a new environment such as a new home environment or day care centre.



Tips on Managing Wandering Behaviour

Depending on the personality of the person with dementia and how well he/she can cope, their reasons for wandering and the safety of their surrounding environment, you or their caregivers can consider the following management strategies: -



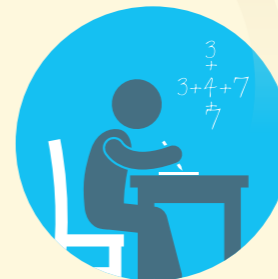
Identify

- Physical check-up helps to identify the presence of any illness, pain or discomfort.
- Get the person with dementia to carry an identification such as an identity bracelet or card with their names, addresses and/or contact numbers. This can be helpful when he/she is found by others/police.
- Identify the wandering behaviour patterns of persons with dementia by keeping records or a diary. E.g. does the behaviour show up at certain times of the day or in response to certain situations which can be carefully controlled.



Remove

- Reduce objects that may prompt or encourage the person with dementia to wander, e.g. handbags, house keys.
- Remove any obstacles to allow person with dementia to wander about safely – ensure supervision is available and the person with dementia has steady gait at all times.



Distraction

- Engage or distract the person with dementia through a simple and quiet activity that are familiar to them from their earlier days.