

Can a person with Alzheimer's live alone?

The following questions may guide decisions about the safety of someone with a memory disorder living alone. It's best to observe the person doing these things rather than rely only on the person's report. Use only the questions that apply to your situation-for example, safe use of power tools may not be an issue for a woman living alone. Some of these questions apply to persons who are left alone during the day. If there are many yes answers, the person may need more supervision, support or a change in living situation.

Safety Concerns/Does the person:

- Have driving accidents, even minor ones?
- Get lost driving or walking?
- Burn pots or forget to turn off burners or oven?
- Forget to extinguish cigarettes?
- Let strangers into the house?
- Lock him/herself out often?
- Forget to secure the house at night?
- Have mood swings and suspicious behaviors?
- Leave the house and get lost?
- Know there are firearms or dangerous tools in the house and how to use them safely?
- Know how to operate the thermostat and judge temperature appropriately?
- Know what to do in case of emergency?
- Have a recent history of being a victim of fraud, telemarketers or a crime?
- Risk injury from falls, vision or balance problems?

Personal Care/Other/Is the person able to:

- Eat well-balanced meals and drink enough fluids?
- Dress appropriately for the weather?
- Bathe and use the toilet when needed?
- Keep up with housekeeping and home repair?
- Pay bills on time, handle the checkbook, credit cards?
- Shop for, store and cook food correctly?
- Use the phone or answering machine?
- Take medicine on time and in the right amount?
- Know current address and phone number?

Gwyther LP & Ballard EL (2002). Working with Family Caregivers of People with Memory Disorders: A North Carolina Information & Assistance Toolkit. Durham, NC: Duke Family Support Program.