

# TIPS TO PREVENT WANDERING:

- Do not leave a person with dementia unsupervised.
- Ensure the person is well-fed, well-hydrated and using the bathroom regularly. Some people wander in an effort to fill these needs. Setting a schedule can help maintain these needs.
- Look for changes in behavior patterns.
- Consult with a physician to see if medications can help. Individuals who wander as a result of delusions or hallucinations may require medications.
- Set a daily routine that includes recreational activities - music therapy, physical exercise or movies - to lessen boredom, under-stimulation or lack of socialization that prompts wandering.
- Reduce environmental stimuli like loud music or overcrowding that might spark this behavior.
- Secure doors and gates in ways that make them difficult to open.
- Add electronic chimes or buzzers so a caregiver is alerted if the individual attempts to exit.
- Identify bathrooms and other rooms with colorful signs to re-orient individuals.

- Place a black mat or paint a black space by an exit, which may appear to be an impassable hole to those with dementia.
- Provide familiar objects, such as family photographs, slippers and a quilt, to an individual living in a long term care facility to make it feel like home.
- Put away essential items, such as the person's coat, shoes, pocketbook or keys since some individuals will not go out without certain articles.

THE PROJECT LIFESAVER PROGRAM HAS HELPED PROVIDE THOUSANDS OF FAMILIES PEACE OF MIND DAILY KNOWING THAT THEIR LOVED ONE HAS PROTECTION AND SAFETY IN CASE THEY WANDER.



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# WANDERING AND PROJECT LIFESAVER



Alzheimer's  
Alliance  
of Smith County

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# PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA WANDER.

Over 5,000 people in Smith County have Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. Of those, approximately 70% to 80% will develop the tendency to wander. Because wandering is such a common symptom of Alzheimer's disease, anyone diagnosed is at risk of wandering at any time. It is best to prevent the problem before it occurs since statistics show the wandering person's chances of survival drop to 50% if not located within 24 hours.

## HOW PROJECT LIFESAVER WORKS:

Project Lifesaver combines "tried and true" radio technology with rescue teams from the local community, including law enforcement and public safety officials. Together, they create an effective life-saving system that has proven itself, time and again, to be reliable, responsive, practical and affordable.

Those who are part of the Project Lifesaver Program wear a personalized wristband that emits a tracking signal. When caregivers notify law enforcement officials that the person is missing, a search and rescue team responds to the wanderer's area and starts searching with the mobile locator tracking system.

Search times have been reduced from hours and days to only minutes. The Project Lifesaver wristband is much more than a passive ID bracelet.

It is a one-ounce battery operated, waterproof wrist transmitter emitting an automatic tracking signal every second, 24 hours a day. The signal is tracked on the ground or in the air over several miles. Since each wristband has a unique radio frequency, the Project Lifesaver search team is able to positively locate and identify the person who has wandered away from home.

## PROJECT LIFESAVER BENEFITS:

- Over 3,400 rescued to date internationally
- Average location time: 30 minutes
- No injuries and no deaths to date
- Average number of officers used in Project Lifesaver searches: 2
- Locates day or night, inside or outside, up to one mile on the ground, more distance from the air.
- Affordable fee, with scholarships available

"Unfortunately, the first wandering incident could be the last. Protect your loved one in every way possible."

- J.E. Saunders  
CEO, Project Lifesaver International

Project Lifesaver belongs to the citizens of Smith County. It is provided through a partnership between the Alzheimer's Alliance of Smith County and the Smith County Sheriff's Office, along with other local law enforcement departments. These groups join in developing and strengthening all aspects of the program, including rescues, fundraising and education within our community.

For general information visit  
[www.projectlifesaver.org](http://www.projectlifesaver.org)



*Bringing Loved  
Ones Home*

