

# Wandering Behavior: Preparing for and Preventing It

Alzheimer's disease causes millions of Americans to lose their ability to recognize familiar places and faces. Six in 10 people with Alzheimer's disease will wander. Many people cannot even remember their name or address. They may become disoriented and lost, even in their own neighborhood. Although common, wandering can be dangerous – even life-threatening. The Alzheimer's Association is working to help save lives through MedicAlert® + Alzheimer's Association Safe Return®, a 24-hour nationwide emergency response service for individuals with Alzheimer's or related dementia that wander or who have a medical emergency.

Here are tips to help caregivers prepare for and prevent wandering behavior.

## Wandering: Who's at risk?

### *Anyone who:*

- Returns from a regular walk or drive later than usual.
- Tries to fulfill former obligations, (i.e. going to work).
- Tries to “go home” even when at home.
- Is restless, paces or makes repetitive movements.
- Has difficulty locating familiar places like the bathroom, bedroom or dining room.
- Checks the whereabouts of familiar people.
- Acts as if doing a hobby or chore, but nothing gets done (e.g. moves around pots and dirt without planting anything).
- Feels lost in a new or changed environment.

### Consider behavior

- Be aware of who is at risk for wandering.
- Identify the most likely times of day that wandering may occur, and plan activities at that time.

- Provide opportunities for activities and exercise. Those who are bored all day are more likely to be restless in the evening, at night.
- When night wandering is a problem, make sure the person has restricted fluids two hours before bedtime and has gone to the bathroom just before bed. Limit daytime naps, if possible.
- Monitor reaction to medications. Consult a physician, if necessary
- Use communication focused on exploration and validation (not correcting) when the individual says that he or she want to leave to go home or to work.
- If wandering is in progress, use distraction to redirect the individual's focus.

### *Consider the home environment*

- Night-lights: Place throughout the home or facility.
- Locks\*: Place out of the line of sight. Install slide bolts at the top or bottom of doors.
- Door knobs\*: Cover knobs with cloth the same color as the door. Use childproof knobs.
- Doors\*: Camouflage doors by painting them the same color as the walls. Cover them with removable curtains or screens.
- Warning bells: Place above doors.
- Monitoring devices: Try devices that signal you when a door is opened. Place a pressure-sensitive mat at the door or person's bedside to alert you to movement.
- Hedges or fence\*: Put around the patio, yard or other outside common areas.



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## ***Consider the home environment (continued)***

- Safety gates or bright colored netting\*: Use to bar access to stairs or the outdoors.
- Furniture\*: Consider providing a recliner or geriatric chair for the individual to sit and rest. It is comfortable and yet restrictive to the body. Use round-cornered furniture, placed against the wall. Remove obstacles.
- Noise levels and confusion: Reduce excessive stimulation caused by movement or noise.
- Common areas: Develop indoor and outdoor areas that can be safely explored.
- Clothing: Provide the person with brightly colored clothing.
- Labeling\*: Label all doors. Use signs or symbols to explain the purpose of each room.
- Secure trigger items: Some people will not go out without a coat, hat, pocketbook, keys, wallet, etc.
- Avoid leaving a person with dementia alone in a car.

## ***Planning ahead***

- Enroll in MedicAlert® + Safe Return and/or consider the use of tracking technology and other wandering risk reduction options.
- Keep a list of people to call when feeling overwhelmed. Have their telephone numbers in one location.
- Ask neighbors, friends and family to call if they see the person alone or dressed inappropriately.
- Keep a recent, close-up photo on hand to give to police.
- Know your neighborhood. Pinpoint dangerous areas near the home, such as bodies of water, open stairwells, dense foliage, tunnels, bus stops and roads with heavy traffic.
- Is the individual right or left-handed? Wandering generally follows the direction of the dominant hand.

- Keep a list of places where the person may wander to, like past jobs, former homes or a church or restaurant.

For safety and peace of mind, enroll in MedicAlert + Safe Return today: Call 1.888.572.8566 (6 a.m. – 7 p.m. (PST) Monday – Friday and 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. (PST) Saturday) or online at [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org).

## **Wandering Risk Reduction Options:**

1. Comfort Zone –  
Comfort Zone is a Web application that includes a location-based mapping service, or LBS . This term refers to a wide range of services that provide information about a person's (or object's) location. If you've ever used a GPS device in your car for turn-by-turn driving directions or tracked a package online, you've used LBS. Comfort Zone plans start at \$42.99 per month plus a \$45 activation fee. A Comfort Zone plan is designed specifically to each device. [www.alz.org/comfortzone](http://www.alz.org/comfortzone).
  - A person with Alzheimer's wears or carries a locator device.
  - As the person travels around town or the country, the device receives signals from satellites or nearby cell towers. The device can then approximate the person's location by measuring the distance between the device and the cell towers or satellite signals.
  - The device communicates with the Comfort Zone Web application.
  - Family members access information about the person's location by using the Internet or calling the monitoring center. Families can also decide on the level of monitoring needed, such as verifying location from a computer; receiving alerts when the person has traveled in or out of a zone; or just emergency assistance if there is a wandering incident.

*\*These are meant to be suggestions only. Follow local, state and federal laws and codes.*

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2. Verizon Sure Response – GPS locating that can be worn as a watch, pendant or belt clip. It is water submersible. \$19.99 equipment price with a 2 year contract and \$30 monthly access charge per device.
  - Unlimited emergency calling.
  - GPS locating which allows Sure Response Care Agents and authorized caregivers to locate the user and provide needed assistance.
  - Sure Response Online — Easily add, remove and update lists of caregivers, authorized caregivers can receive alerts and call the user.

3. Adiant Solutions Headquarters  
7825 E. Gelding Dr. – Suite 103  
Scottsdale, AZ 85260 USA  
Phone: 480-970-2574  
Sales 480-970-2574 1-888-399-8226  
sales@adiant-solutions.com

This bracelet, called S-911 offers real-time tracking for any person with a cognitive disorder that leads to the tendency to wander or run off. The S-911 bracelet provides up-to-the-second (within several feet) real-time GPS tracking as well as customer controlled geo-fencing — where caregivers receive a text, email and call within seconds after the wearer leaves a certain designated area — and two-way communication where the device automatically picks up after three rings to get in touch with the wandering loved one even when they might not know to answer. The device adds other features like a “G-force” fall detector, a speed sensor and a panic button all in the form of a wristwatch-style bracelet.

4. LifePROTEKT’s S-911 Bracelet Locator HC Wrist wearable security device with Assisted GPS technology for Healthcare applications. It’s also a Quad-band GSM/GPRS Phone for voice and data communications. S-911 Bracelet Locator has been designed based on the application requirement from law enforcement agencies and health authorities. Such as water resistant, tamper detection, motion sensor,

power saving, data encryption and compression are all unique features. The suggested applications are: Child protection, Law enforcement, Home arrest, Parole monitoring, Lone Worker Protection, Elderly Care and Alzheimer Care. \$359 plus monthly fee for service plan and emergency call center – approx. \$50 a month. Website: [locationbasedgps.com](http://locationbasedgps.com). Phone: 1-(800) 939 3952

5. GTX Corp Headquarters  
GPS tennis shoes. Men and Women sizes 5-14. Approx. \$300 plus monthly fee  
[www.gpsshoe.com](http://www.gpsshoe.com)  
117 W. 9th Street, # 1214  
Los Angeles, CA 90015  
Phone: 213-489-3019  
Toll Free: 877-489-3019  
Fax: 213-489-3062  
[info@gtxcorp.com](mailto:info@gtxcorp.com)  
*GPS Tennis Shoes also available at the Alzheimer’s Store: [www.alzstore.com](http://www.alzstore.com)*

6. Project Lifesaver – Managed by various law enforcement agencies utilizing radio frequency technology to locate lost individuals. Person wears a transmitter bracelet which requires monthly battery checks. In Kansas City area, Raytown (Nicole Grivno 816-737-6020), Westwood (Chief Wells, Officer Don Brooks, Officer Robert Burgess 913-362-3737) and Douglas County Sheriff’s Dept. (Officer Philip Mathis, Officer Rita Fulton-Mays (785-841-0007) have the program.

7. Take Me Home – Johnson County Sheriff 913-791-5800  
The Take Me Home program is a database maintained by the Johnson County Sheriff’s Office Communications Division for adults and children who may have difficulty communicating due to a developmental or cognitive disability. This database is only accessible to law enforcement personnel.

The database includes a picture, disability information, physical description and emergency contact information for all registered individuals. If a person in the Take Me Home program is encountered alone by a police officer, or is

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reported missing, the officer can access the database by the person's name or description to locate their information. With this information at hand, the officer can appropriately assist the person.

This is a FREE service offered to cognitively impaired citizens who live in Johnson County, Kansas.

## 8. MedicAlert®+ Alzheimer's Association Safe Return®

Have an alliance to improve the safety of persons with Alzheimer's and other dementias. It is a 24-hour nationwide emergency response service for those that wander or have a medical emergency. If an individual wanders and becomes lost caregivers call the 24-hour emergency response line to report it (800-625-3780). This activates a community report network which includes the local Alzheimer's Association chapters and law enforcement agencies, to help reunite the family member or caregiver with the person who wandered.

### Features

- One ID product (bracelet or necklace) serves two purposes. It provides emergency medical information and assists in the event of a wandering incident.
- Member's personal health information lists medical conditions, medications and allergies and can be updated 24 hours a day through a private online account or by calling a toll free number during business hours.
- National database includes a member's photo and emergency contact information to help reunite the lost person with his or her caregiver.
- MedicAlert+ Safe Return hotline activates the resources of law enforcement, medical professionals and the local chapter staff to assist the member when an incident-either wandering or medical emergency occurs.

### Product Costs

- Enrollment Fee \$55 (+\$7 s/h) with an annual renewal fee of \$35.
- Enrollment Kit includes 24-hour emergency response system, ID jewelry (bracelet or necklace), personalized.
- Personalized Emergency Wallet Card.
- Personal Health Record.
- "6 Steps to a Safe Return" refrigerator magnet-provides useful tips when someone is missing.

***For safety and peace of mind, enroll in  
MediAlert+ Safe Return today:  
Call 1-888-572-8566***

## 9. Global Tracking Group

Small light weight, water proof the UBI-5000E real-time personal tracker, reliable GPS tracking device. Superior sensitivity to track indoors and outdoors. Contact 1-800-774-9808. Product material accessed on-line.

### Features

- Self-contained device fits in the palm of your hand.
- Built in 3D motion sensor for motion detecting.
- Location information is reported using a direct GPRS data connection.
- Real-time location reports of 15 seconds available.
- Geofence feature sends alert if target moves from pre-defined area.

### Product Costs

- Device \$224.95
- Service Plans: Hourly: \$19.99 per month. Tracks once every hour, plus you have an additional 300 tracks per month to use whenever you wish. Extended A: \$26.99 per month. Tracks every 25 minutes, plus you

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have an additional 200 tracks per month to use whenever you wish. Extended B: \$41.99 per month. Tracks every 10 minutes, plus you have an additional 100 tracks per month to use whenever you wish. Extended C: \$49.99 per month. Tracks every 5 minutes. Unlimited: \$56.99 per month. Tracks minute by minute.

## 10. Tracking System Direct

If you have a parent or family member who shows a consistent pattern of forgetful behavior, or may struggle living an independent life, a personal monitoring GPS tracking device will make your life easier and less stressful. A personal monitoring GPS tracking system is extremely valuable because it will alert you or record if an elderly person is; wandering off or lost in a familiar or unfamiliar location, safe inside or around their home or making scheduled doctor visits. GPS tracking systems can provide certainty, safety, and security that make the difficult road of memory-loss a little easier and less stressful for everyone evolved. Real-time tracker allows family and caregivers complete whereabouts of any senior 24/7. Contact 951-704-9503.

### Product Costs

- Tracker Bracelet: \$699.00 includes monitoring for 1 Year.

### Features

- Real Time Location of Seniors
- Locking Band Option
- Working Wristwatch
- Panic Button Safety Feature
- Virtual Boundary Alerts (Ideal For Wandering Seniors)
- Two Way Voice (Allows Family to Speak With Senior)

## 11. Home Buddy Products

The Portable Alert Lifesaver enables your loved one to remain active and independent with the peace of mind that help is just a button push away. No matter where they are, they can speak directly with a care center representative. They can send help to individual's location through the use of GPS technology. If a loved one wanders off the GPS location technology can be used even when the button is not pushed. Contact 316-262-Contact 316-262-8339 Office, Toll-Free 866-922-8339, [www.homebuddy.org](http://www.homebuddy.org)

Product Cost: Month to Month service \$44.95 includes GPS Bracelet no contracts.

## 12. Brickhouse Security

GPS Tracking for the elderly persons could be the difference between life and death. GPS tracker alerts a caregiver anytime the person with dementia wanders outside of their home. Choose from any tiny GPS tracker or the revolutionary GPS shoe to set a virtual GPS border around the home. If the person wanders outside of the home you are notified immediately by text or email. Also has a device called the Spark Nano that the person carries on them. Contact: 800-654-7966

Product Costs: GPS shoes by Aertex Velcro or laces: \$299.00 no contracts \$29.99 per month.

The Spark Nano 3.0 GPS Tracker \$149.95 no contracts \$29.95 per month.

## 13. SafetyCare\*

### EMT GPS Watch

The EMT GPS Watch Mobile Medical Alert Monitoring Device live the active lifestyle you deserve and be protected all the time and everywhere. SafetyCare provides the industry's most technically advanced and accurate GPS device with two-way voice communication. The LifeBeacon™ allows seniors to age in place safely while staying active throughout their community. The GPS device can be worn as a watch or a pendant. The LifeBeacon™ can be charged by simply placing the device on the charging cradle or use the backup so the

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device is never out of service. For better peace of mind the LifeBeacon™ instantly links you to the SafetyCare Response Center staffed exclusively 24/7 by certified Emergency Medical Technicians. Contact: 800-700-4018

Product Costs: EMT GPS monthly service \$49.99 per month includes with 24/7 monitoring, no activation fee, cancel anytime, choice of stylish wristwatch, pendant or beltclip.

## 14. Great Call

The 5Star Urgent Response Compact discreet and GPS enabled 5Star can prepare you for any unsafe or uncertain situation. Simply press the button anytime you need help and you're connected to the 5Star or press and hold to be connected to 9-1-1 emergency service.

Features:

- Easy to use single button operation
- Immediate connection to NAED Certified Response Agents or 9-1-1
- Two way cellular communication with powerful speaker
- Assistance available anytime anywhere
- Enhanced location tracking with GPS
- Agents can contact 9-1-1 on your behalf
- Reliable nationwide coverage

- No contracts or cancellation fees
- Personal Profile provides key information in an emergency
- Get medical advice 24/7 with Urgent Care
- Online locator allows you to securely track the user
- Multilanguage translation support in over 100 languages

Product Costs

- Purchase of Device \$49.99 plus activation fee \$35.00 activate on line and save \$10.00
- 5Star Pouch \$ 19.99
- 5Star wristband \$19.99
- Monthly fee \$14.99

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alzheimer's  association™

6/20/18

**How to Contact the Alzheimer's Association – Heart of America Chapter**  
**1.800.272.3900 • [alz.org/kansascity](http://alz.org/kansascity)**

**Main Office**  
3846 W. 75th Street  
Prairie Village, KS 66208

**Northeast Kansas Regional Office**  
3625 SW 29th St.  
Suite 102  
Topeka, KS 66614

**Northwest Missouri Regional Office**  
10th and Faraon  
St. Joseph, MO 64501

**Southeast Kansas Regional Office**  
2601 Gabriel  
Parsons, KS 67357

*The Heart of America Chapter provides programs and services in 66 counties in Kansas and Missouri. These programs and services are made possible thanks to generous donations from individuals, corporations, and foundations. Contributions and donations allow the Chapter to provide supportive services, including care consultations, free of charge to individuals and families.*