



MAJOR NEUROCOGNITIVE DISORDERS: DEMENTIA

Programme régional ambulatoire de gériatrie (PRAG)

WANDERING



WHAT IS WANDERING?

It is not uncommon to observe a person with a neurocognitive disorder moving around the home or outdoors. They wander, sometimes appearing to be looking for something in particular, sometimes appearing not to care about anything. The wandering can sometimes go so far as to lead the person to enter a room that is not their own without the person realizing it (intrusive wandering).



WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE CAUSES ?

- ❖ **Hunger, thirst or the need to go to the bathroom.**
- ❖ **Physical cause** (discomfort, pain, effect of medication).
- ❖ **Need to use up energy.**
- ❖ **New environment or change in surroundings, loss of bearings**
- ❖ **Search or seeking** (person, place, object).
- ❖ **Anxiety, boredom or loneliness.**
- ❖ **Desire to return home** (no longer recognizes the environment).
- ❖ **Life habits.** For example, a former mail carrier who walked every day.
- ❖ **Over or under stimulating environment.**



Sometimes it is possible to identify the cause of the wandering by observing your loved one's face and their path (walking through the kitchen, near doors and windows, etc.).

HOW TO RESPOND ?

**First, take a moment to review the document
"The Adapted Approach"**

- ❖ Try to identify what your loved one is looking for and respond to their needs (hunger, boredom) if circumstances allow.
- ❖ Make snacks and beverages available.
- ❖ Be physically active every day (do activities that they are capable of doing).
For example: going for a walk or enrolling them in a day center, etc.
- ❖ Personalize the environment to give them some reference points.
- ❖ Allow access to as many rooms in the home as possible (provided the environment is safe).
- ❖ Provide activities or small tasks to keep them busy.
- ❖ Avoid forcing them to sit still.
- ❖ Purchase comfortable walking shoes.
- ❖ Check regularly on their fatigue level and the condition of their feet. Your loved one may be wandering beyond his or her energy level, despite the pain.
- ❖ Make sure there are no obstacles on the floor that could cause a fall.

How to prevent wandering outside the home:

- ❖ Install door knob covers.
- ❖ Keep car keys out of sight.
- ❖ Place coats and outdoor clothing in a closet.
- ❖ Install a bell or an alarm at exits or doors.



For their safety:

- ❖ Assess the possibility of getting them a geolocation bracelet or GPS tracking device and/or identification bracelet.
- ❖ Ensure that the person's address and phone number are written in their wallet and/or coat.
- ❖ Complete the Laval police description form with a recent photo of the person.

In the event that your loved one exhibits behaviors that concern you, do not hesitate to contact:

- **Info-Santé/Info-Social 811**
- **Your assigned worker at the CLSC**
- **Discussion with the health care team**
- **A doctor**

The proposed strategies are suggestions for possible solutions to explore. Be creative and adapt them to your loved one, because you know your loved one the best!

Conception par Guillaume Lajoie et Natacha Aubé, Psychoéducateurs PRAG
Traduit par Kelly Raymond, infirmière clinicienne PRAG
En collaboration avec l'équipe professionnelle PRAG et une proche aidante.

Inspiré de :

Phaneuf, M. (2007). *Le vieillissement perturbé : La maladie d'Alzheimer* (2^e édition). Montréal, Canada : Chenelière Éducation.
Société d'Alzheimer (2013). *L'errance*. Repéré à <https://alzheimer.ca/sites/default/files/files/chapters-on/cornwall/info/fact%20sheets%20fr/wandering%20ascd%20-fr.pdf>

Centre intégré
de santé
et de services sociaux
de Laval

Québec 