

## ALZHEIMER

### THERAPIES <http://response.aplaceformom.com/t?r=2842&c=452&l=46&ctl=1D53:9A99E474ED4733CDF2F0B8FF5D8573CC&>

While [Alzheimer's](#) remains an incurable illness, researchers are making strides towards [therapies](#) that can lessen symptoms, increase function and improve quality of life. These drug-free therapies, which are being explored in many [memory care](#) communities, range from high-tech [iPads](#) to no-tech chocolates. Here's a sampling of innovative and promising new therapies to help enhance the lives of the memory impaired:

**1. iPad:** Some memory care communities have reported success providing customized [iPads](#) (lightweight, touchscreen, notepad computers) to their residents. The devices include puzzles to exercise resident's minds, activities that improve dexterity and even apps (programs) that provide prompting to those who need reminders. Simple, yet engrossing, games also promote a sense of mastery; the satisfying feeling you get when you accomplish a task that is neither too easy, nor too hard.

**2. Light therapy:** Simply brightening room lights during the day may benefit elders with Alzheimer's and other kinds of dementia. A study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that bright lighting improves mood and cognition in older people with memory disorders. More intensive light therapy, or UV therapy, involves sessions sitting by a special, full-spectrum lamp. A study by Wayne State University suggested this kind of light therapy may be beneficial, as well. Light therapy may be particularly helpful for mitigating [sundowning](#) behavior.

**3. Art Therapy:** Art therapy, which involves both viewing and creating art, is not a new concept. But in the 21st century, art therapy has become increasingly utilized for Alzheimer's and dementia care. In 2005, under the guidance of Dr. John Ziesel from [Arista for Alzheimer's](#), the Museum of Modern Art in New York instituted an after-hours program for people with Alzheimer's and other dementias called, "Meet Me at MoMA". Dozens of other museums have recently implemented similar programs, which proponents claim have benefits that last well beyond therapy sessions. Dr. Ziesel says art therapy brings out the best in dementia sufferers, "If you met these people back where they lived on an ordinary day, you simply would not see them being this articulate and this assured."

**4. Favorite food therapy:** Some memory care providers have found that a "comfort centered approach", makes for more contented, peaceful residents who need less [medication](#). A recent newspaper article describes a memory care community in [Arizona](#) where residents are allowed "practically anything that brings comfort"—from chocolates to a small bedtime drink.

**5. Storytelling:** A new dementia therapy program called [TimeSlips](#) involves showing a photo to a therapy group, and asking members to make up a story based on the image. The program aims to "inspire people with dementia to hone and share the gifts of their imaginations," and gives memory impaired people an opportunity to socialize and be creative without pressure to remember.

No known therapies can permanently reverse the course of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, but the medical and caregiving community is learning more and more about strategies to improve the lives of the memory impaired. Each person is unique, so what benefits one person might not benefit another, but with a diverse repertoire of therapeutic approaches, [caregivers](#) (professional and family) are likely to find the right techniques for their situation.

#### **Ask the Expert**

Want to learn more? Read some common questions and answers about Alzheimer's disease from expert, [Megan Carnarius—a sought-after national speaker on Alzheimer's](#).

#### **Need Help? Find Memory Care and Senior Living**

Finding the best care for a loved one can be difficult, but we can help. And it's completely free. [Talk to a Senior Living Advisor today](#).