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**DEMENTIA - PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE**

It is important to talk about what you want with your family and medical team while you are still well.

**RETIRING FROM DRIVING**: Many people can start a car and steer but they reach a point where they cannot safely act in an emergency. They must retire from driving. This can be a devastating loss for many people. Planning ahead can help ease the sense of loss and improve quality of life.

* You can arrange for someone else to drive you to appointments or activities.
* Selling your car can give you money to pay for a taxi.
* You can use public transit.

**WHEN YOU CAN NO LONGER CARE FOR YOURSELF:** As dementia progresses, you will eventually lose the ability to care for yourself. Choices for care are:

* Stay in your home setting and be cared for by family members and others.
* Move to a nursing home or other care facility.

It is important to have a backup “safety plan” for how you will be cared for if the health of your family or the cost of in-home care make care at home not possible.

**WHEN YOU GET SICK:** When a person with dementia is at a point they depend on others for care, no longer recognize friends or family, or becomes very ill or injured, there are choices:

* You can be hospitalized and have treatment, including medicines or surgery.
* You can be cared for in the home (or current living situation) with a focus on quality of life and comfort.
* Hospice care is an option if your dementia has worsened so you no longer recognize friends and family, or cannot care for yourself.

**EATING & SWALLOWING:** As the illness gets worse, people with dementia may:

* Have trouble swallowing.
* Lose weight.
* Food or drink can “go down the wrong tube” into the lungs, which can cause pneumonia.

We can either:

* Keep the person comfortable and allow natural death, or
* Feed them artificially with a tube through the nose or into the stomach.
  + Artificial feeding does not prolong life or improve quality of life.

**WHEN YOUR HEART AND BREATHING STOP:** When your heart and breathing stop there are choices:

1. Doctors or paramedics can try to revive you.
   * Trying to revive a person with late-stage dementia does not usually help.
   * Even if they are revived, people might not survive to leave the hospital
2. We can allow natural death.

Although these are hard topics to discuss, it is important in order for you to help your family and others make decisions in the future.

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