



## WHY DOES THIS HAPPEN?

*People with Alzheimer's or another dementia might be:*

- more tired in the late afternoon
- confused by changing amounts of light
- scared by shadows
- reacting to your feelings of being tired

# Sundowning

People with Alzheimer's or another dementia may become more confused or nervous later in the day, often as the sun sets. This is called sundowning. They may see or hear things that are not there. They may accuse people of things that are not true, like stealing or lying, and may pace or walk back and forth. This is not done on purpose, and people with dementia cannot control it.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

### Make Changes at Home

- turn lights on early in the afternoon to make the house brighter
- turn down (or turn off) the television or radio
- turn on soothing music
- avoid loud or confusing noises
- clear a path for the person to walk back and forth

### Pay Attention to Meals and Snacks

- provide a large meal at lunch and a light meal at dinner
- allow less caffeine, sugar, coffee, tea, and soda after 3:00 pm
- remove access to alcohol and cigarettes

### Keep a Schedule

- go to bed and wake up at the same time every day
- take walks or dance to use up extra energy
- plan doctor visits, outings, baths in the morning

### Other Ideas

- be calm and reassuring
- be flexible...if one idea doesn't work, try another
- comfort her and say or do something to calm her fears
- try a new activity, like sorting coins or dancing

**Alzheimer's**  
ORANGE COUNTY

**Helpline**

**844-373-4400**

**alzoc.org**