

Dementia and the seasons

Does the weather and seasons have an impact on a person living with dementia?

The best way to think about this question is: “does the weather have an impact on those who don’t have dementia?”. The answer is yes. On long summer days we tend to go to sleep later because the sun is high in the sky, and on short winter days when it’s cold, we may want to crawl into bed by 5 o’clock in the afternoon! For a person living with dementia, the seasons will have an impact in a few ways:

The length of the day

We know that the number hours of sunlight change with the seasons. This can create a prompt for those living with dementia. Looking out the window and seeing it either dark or light can prompt them to end their day or continue what they were doing. This can then impact their sleep pattern.

Change in sleep patterns

If someone goes to sleep at 5.00pm, simply because it is dark outside, their night will end at midnight, and they will stay awake until the morning. This may result in a reversed sleep cycle where the person living with dementia will sleep during the morning and be awake at different times of day. Sleep deprivation of this kind can lead to heightened aggravation and anxiety for both them, and their support partner.

Cold temperatures and isolation

On a cold winters day, the temperature can be enough to deter someone from going outside and getting involved in their day-to-day routine



outside of their home. This may cause a person living with dementia to stay at home and isolate.

Heating

During the winter, there can be a number of challenges caused by home heaters. If a person living with dementia does not understand how to properly turn on the heater, it can either cause a cold environment, or if the heater is left on, can cause the person to overheat, leaving them dehydrated.

How has the season impacted someone you know living with dementia?



Find out more
1300 015 406
www.grouphomes.com.au