

Health Trends

Caring For A Loved One With Alzheimer's Disease

(NAPSA)—The majority of the 4.5 million Americans with Alzheimer's disease live at home, where family and friends provide most of their care. Caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's disease, a progressive brain disorder that not only affects memory, but gradually destroys a person's ability to learn and carry out daily activities, can be emotionally and physically challenging. As memory loss and other symptoms worsen, the amount of time and energy caregivers and families spend taking care of their loved one increases.

The *Memories to Treasure* program provides people who care for a loved one with Alzheimer's tips on caregiving and information about the disease, while helping them connect with their loved one through the art of scrapbooking.

"Alzheimer's caregivers have unique needs; *Memories to Treasure* offers resources to help facilitate interaction with loved ones," says Gail Hunt, president and CEO of the National Alliance for Caregiving. "Engaging in meaningful activities, such as scrapbooking, allows time spent together to be more positive and can benefit everyone involved."

While people with mild Alzheimer's disease often experience problems with short-term memory, they may recall memories from the distant past. Looking at old photographs and keepsakes may lead to conversations about people and



Scrapbooking may help family caregivers feel more connected to loved ones with Alzheimer's disease.

past events, and can be enjoyable for everyone involved.

"Activities, such as scrapbooking, can be beneficial for families facing Alzheimer's disease," says Benjamin Seltzer, M.D., director of the Alzheimer's Disease & Memory Disorders Center, Tulane University Health Sciences Center, New Orleans. "Engaging in meaningful activities with a loved one is only one facet of caregiving; however, it is also important to know that there are treatments available that can help slow symptoms of the disease."

Memories to Treasure can be accessed online at www.memories-totreasure.com. The Web site offers tips on caregiving, information about Alzheimer's disease and a Memory Checklist to help guide discussion with a physician. Caregivers will also find instructions to create a scrapbook with a loved one facing Alzheimer's disease.

When caring for someone with Alzheimer's, keep these tips in mind to help provide the best care possible:

- Your loved one may become frustrated while bathing, dressing or eating. Try to be calm and reassuring during such moments.
- Keep your loved one involved. Plan an activity, such as scrapbooking, for a time of day when your loved one seems to be at his or her best.
- Take time for yourself and build a strong support network. Let your family and friends know what you need and when you need it.
- Seek information so that you can make choices about care and treatment for your loved one.

Memories to Treasure is brought to the Alzheimer's community by Eisai Inc. and Pfizer Inc, in partnership with the National Alliance for Caregiving and *Creating Keepsakes* scrapbook magazine. Dr. Seltzer's participation in *Memories to Treasure* has been sponsored by Eisai and Pfizer. For more information on the program, please visit www.memoriestotreasure.com.