

An occupational therapist or speech therapist can recommend adaptive equipment during mealtime:


- ✓ **Built Up Spoon:** good for decreased grasp
- ✓ **Weighted Spoon:** can reduce tremors while feeding
- ✓ **Scooper Plate:** with raised edges to get the food from the plate to the utensil with one simple motion.
- ✓ **Plate Guard:** can be added to plates to reduce spills
- ✓ **Flexi Nosey Cup:** designed for someone with limitations on bending the neck or tilting the head

## Support for every stage

Needs evolve over time, so it's important to schedule evaluations periodically. Therapists strive to provide a client-centered approach tailored to everyone's unique situation. Reach out to a licensed professional to explore the right solutions!

**New Jersey is an all-access state;** you do not need a referral for OT or PT, unless you want insurance reimbursement. However, speech therapy requires a **referral** by a physician for an initial evaluation.

Building a collaborative care team empowers you as the caregiver to handle these physical challenges with greater confidence and resilience, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for both you and the person with memory loss.



## WE CARE

We hope these tips help you understand the beneficial attributes of occupational, speech, and physical therapy. For further support on these and other issues related to caregiving, please call the Care2Caregivers helpline. Our dedicated, understanding professional staff members, who have also been family caregivers, are here to listen and guide you.



WHEN YOU CARE • WE ARE THERE

### For more information:

Comprehensive Services on Aging (COPSA) has been providing compassionate and sensitive mental health care to older adults since 1975. A team of Geriatric Psychiatrists, Social Workers and Case Managers are available to assist families with diagnosis and treatment. COPSA also provides training for professionals, family caregivers and the community on issues related to aging, memory and mental health.

Care2Caregivers provides resources, referrals, information and supportive counseling to anyone caring for someone with memory loss. Call for help.

**HELPLINE: 800.424.2494**  
**[www.Care2Caregivers.com](http://www.Care2Caregivers.com)**



## SUPPORT for EVERY STEP:

*Occupational, Speech and Physical Therapy for Memory Loss*



Occupational, speech, and physical therapy can play a vital role in helping individuals with memory loss improve daily function, communication, and mobility, enhancing overall well-being and quality of life. Caregivers who use these supportive therapies can gain valuable tools and strategies to support their family member, reduce stress and enhance their ability to provide effective, compassionate care.

## Occupational Therapy

### Does your Family Member Struggle with Self-Care Tasks such as Dressing, Sleeping, Bathing or Toileting?

Occupational therapists empower individuals to maintain independence in daily life. They can assist with behavioral management and provide support with:

- ✓ **Daily Activities:** dressing, bathing, toileting, resting, eating, swallowing, mobility, and hygiene
- ✓ **Instrumental Activities of Daily Living:** caregiving, communication, finances, home management, safety, and health management
- ✓ **Specialized Areas:** vision, cognition, driving and mental health

For people with dementia, occupational therapy creates personalized strategies to support both the individual and their caregivers. Occupational therapists can assess the environment and provide suggestions to make it safer. They may recommend durable medical equipment (DME) such as:

- ✓ **Mobility aids:** Canes, walkers, crutches, wheelchairs (manual and power), scooters
- ✓ **Bathroom aids:** Raised toilet seats, grab bars (and where to install them), bath benches, shower chairs, bottom buddy, bidet

Note: Mobility aids are often covered by insurance and bathroom aids usually are not.

- ✓ **Dressing aids:** Button hooks, zipper pulls, sock aids, reachers, grabbers, dressing sticks
- ✓ **Eating aids:** Adaptive utensils, plate guards, built-up handles, rocker knives
- ✓ **Orthotics:** Splints, braces for hand/wrist, or arm/leg support
- ✓ **Seating systems:** Specialized cushions, back supports, positioning devices

## Physical Therapy

### Does your family member struggle with Mobility, Falls or Getting In and Out of a Car?

Physical therapy can help you or the person with dementia to maintain movement, build strength, and find relief from pain due to injuries, chronic conditions, or aging. The goal is improved ability to perform everyday tasks.

It's not just about recovery—equally important is preventing future damage, so the person can stay active, independent, and live life with less discomfort. Physical activity can help people improve and maintain their balance, strength, mobility, and fitness. It can also help increase cognitive function and reduce depression and behavioral difficulties that may arise.

If you are having difficulty with transitioning to and from the car, bed, toilet, chair or other places around the house, there are various devices that may help. Here are the types of transfer

equipment for which occupational therapists or physical therapists can provide training:

- ✓ **Stand Pivot Transfer:** For individuals who are able to stand
- ✓ **Squat Pivot Transfer:** For individuals who are able to squat
- ✓ **Lateral Transfer:** For those who cannot use their legs but can assist with scooting or using their arms
- ✓ **Sara Steady:** A mechanical lift for those that can use their arms to lift
- ✓ **Hoyer Transfer:** A mechanical lift for individuals who need full assistance

## Speech Therapy

### Does your care recipient struggle with communication? Do they need encouragement for feeding or do they cough while eating or drinking?

These challenges are common as dementia progresses. Regarding communication, speech therapists can help improve understanding, expression, and social interactions through tailored strategies, such as alternative communication tools or memory aids.

If feeding or swallowing is a concern, a speech therapist can assess swallowing safety. They can recommend diet modifications to food and liquid textures, and provide exercises to strengthen swallowing muscles, reducing the risk of choking or aspiration.

Seeking help from a speech therapist can make mealtimes safer.

*(continued on fold-in panel)*

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[www.COPSAInstitute.com](http://www.COPSAInstitute.com)

