

# Alzheimer's, Caregivers, and Mealtime:

Dining chairs that swivel...turn...roll...prevent falls, reduce injuries, and increase dignity and self-worth

Mealtimes can be especially problematic for caregivers providing care for persons with Alzheimer's. While the process of being seated at the table is routine for many of us, it is a significant challenge for caregivers as persons with Alzheimer's often have difficulty comprehending verbal instructions.

Caregivers are encouraged to establish a "relationship bond" and to maintain "eye contact" with persons in their care. To do so they are cautioned from "approaching persons from behind" or from "surprising or startling" them. And yet when mealtime assistance is required caregivers have no choice but to approach the seated person from behind and push on the back of the chair simply to get the seated person moved up-to the table.



## A. Preventing Falls at Mealtime

While the process of being seated at the table is routine for many of us, the process of

seating a person with Alzheimer's at the table involves two distinct and separate steps that need to be understood by the family and caregiver.

### Step 1: Getting seated in the chair

It is not uncommon for a person with Alzheimer's to bump into furniture while attempting to get seated in a chair. This can have disastrous results, as any unintended contact with the chair can cause it to move unexpectedly, often resulting in a fall or injury!

Unfortunately, traditional chairs fail both seniors and caregivers



as a **standard dining chair** is not designed to move, putting the caregiver at risk of incurring a personal injury as a result of overexertion,

while...



the **office/task chair** is designed to roll too easily (not stable) putting the seated person at risk of incurring an injury due to a fall when the chair moves unexpectedly.

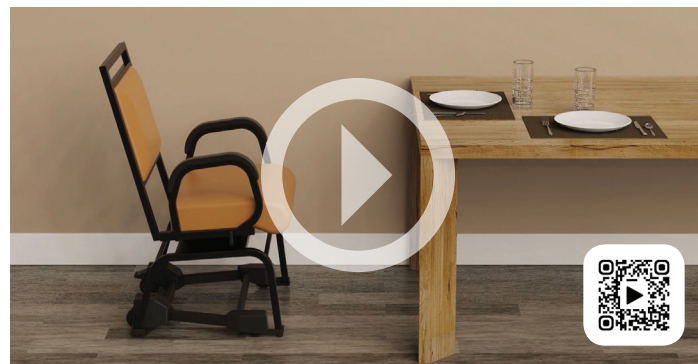
### Step 2: Being moved up-to and away-from the table

Once seated, the physical demands required to move a seated person up to the table can be exhausting for the caregiver. Any activity which involves pushing, pulling, shoving, and twisting of the seated person serves only to increase mealtime stress and anxiety for both seated person and caregiver.

## B. Reducing Injuries and Increasing Dignity at Mealtime

Dining chairs designed for today's seniors and caregivers must include features enabling the chair to **swivel...turn...roll...and brake** for safety, thereby reducing the risk of injury for both the seated person and the caregiver!

Chairs that **swivel** and **lock** eliminate table interference as the seat of the chair is swiveled 90 degrees away from the table.



Watch Video: <https://vimeo.com/707095958>

This allows full access to the seat of the chair for the person being seated. Once they are comfortably in the chair, they can release the swivel lock and rotate themselves towards the table.

Additionally, chairs that also roll and brake for safety can be moved even further from the table, providing increased clearance, should a second caregiver be required when transferring the person into the seat of the chair.

Once seated, they can be rotated back towards the table, and the caregiver effortlessly glides them into position at the table before securing the brakes.



**Exiting the table:** With the seat of the chair turned (90 degrees) away from the table, the seated person is also able to rise from the chair and walk directly away from the table.

This eliminates the need for the person to lean on the table and shuffle/pivot his/her feet as they reach for their walker.

### Why is a heavier chair safer when caring for a person with Alzheimer's?

At first glance, caregivers assigned the task of moving a seated person up to the table opt for a lightweight chair, thinking this will ease their effort when moving that person forward.

However, what they fail to appreciate is (a) once the person is seated, it is the total weight of the person and the chair that needs to be moved up-to the table, and (b) a lightweight chair tends to move prematurely, increasing the risk of injury to the person being seated.

Caregivers should consider selecting a chair designed both for stability and mobility. A **sturdy chair with arms** offers support as the person slowly lowers him/herself into the chair. A heavier chair provides increased stability and thus is less likely to move prematurely. Chairs fitted with lockable inline wheels provide needed mobility, enabling the caregiver to roll the seated person up-to the table with ease and grace.

Chairs that **Swivel...Turn...Roll...**and Brake for safety:

- provide those with Alzheimer's a greater degree of dignity and self-worth
- eliminate the need for care partners to push-pull-shove-twist on a chair
- reduce mealtime stress and anxiety for both the seated person and the care partner
- create a more enjoyable mealtime routine for all

## Chairs that Swivel...Turn...Roll eliminate table interference...



Traditional Seating



**SEAT:** Swivels  
Locks - 90°



**SEAT:** Swivels  
Locks - 90°      **CHAIR:** Rolls (Inline)  
Brakes

