



## Safer walking | Te Hīkoi Kia Haumaru

### Information sheet

Walking is an enjoyable activity and part of everyday life. Walking enables us to connect with people and places, carry out tasks and keep fit. Walking is the term used in this information sheet rather than 'wandering'. Wandering suggests an aimless activity, whereas walking around often has a purpose. Walking benefits people with dementia mate wareware.

However, there is risk of getting lost or injured when awareness of location and finding the way home again is affected. Balancing safety for people with dementia mate wareware, along with the need for independence and choice, is complex as people's abilities change over time. How these tensions may be resolved will depend upon the environment in which walking takes place and families/whānau and care partners' support in finding ways to walk safely.

### **Why might people with dementia mate wareware walk around? | He aha a hīkoi haere ai te hunga kua pāngai e te mate wareware?**

There could be several reasons why a person with dementia mate wareware walks around. If there is a change from normal walking habits try keeping a journal for a couple of weeks - record when walking takes place and any reasons why. Identify triggers or reasons for walking to help work out how safe walking can be supported.

When there is a sudden change in behaviour check with your health professional to rule out health issues such as pain, discomfort or anxiety or depression. If the person is more confused than usual it might be as a result of an underlying illness.

Possible reasons to walk around include:

- continuing a habit of regular walking
- feeling lost or unsettled in a new place
- feeling bored and needing to keep occupied
- using up energy

- searching for people or places that are part of the past
- responding to anxiety
- getting confused about the time- day and night

### **Supporting safe walking | Te tautoko i te hīkoi haumarū**

Encourage movement and exercise. Do not limit the urge to walk. Instead find a way to walk safely. Approaches will depend on environmental risk (eg the risks of a busy city location compared to a small community where the person is well known), the person's abilities to cope and communicate and the ability to modify triggers to walking.

Strategies for reducing risk include:

- Have a whānau discussion about supporting safe walking as part of advanced support planning after the diagnosis of dementia mate wareware. Work together to support safe walking habits before there is a risk of getting lost.
- Develop regular routes that the family/whānau know well. Encourage walking during the day rather than in the evening, wear suitable shoes, and walk with a companion or group.
- Carry identification with the name and phone number of someone who can be contacted. An identity bracelet can be worn. Consider completing a [safe walking profile](#).
- Consider a locator device such as a mobile phone with a GPS function, or specialised devices using GPS or radio frequencies. See [WanderSearch](#) for a simple NZ radio frequency tracking system or [Safer Walking technology](#). Your local Alzheimers/ Dementia organisation can provide information about available technology.
- Encourage usual activities such as gardening, housework, hobbies and recreational interests.
- When there is a risk of getting lost avoid triggers that may encourage walking alone. Keep coats, bags, umbrellas and the dog lead out of sight. Outside doors can have a bell/buzzer which sounds when the door is opened. An approach that suits the person with dementia mate wareware is important-talk to your local Alzheimers/Dementia organisation about options.
- Avoid confronting the person with dementia mate wareware if they really want to leave and cannot go alone as this will upset both of you.

Help with suitable clothing and walk together until the focus can be shifted on to going home. Do take your mobile phone in case you need a lift home.

- Let people you trust in your neighbourhood know when getting lost becomes a concern and give them your contact number so they can keep a look out.

### **What to do if a person with dementia mate wareware cannot be located | Ki te ngaro tētahi tangata kua pāngia e te mate wareware**

- Try not to panic. Make a thorough search of the house, surrounding area and known routes. Notify your neighbours and ask if anyone has seen them.
- Contact your local ambulance and hospitals in case they have picked them up and are caring for them. If there is an immediate life risk to them (i.e., extremes of weather/poor health) OR if you are unable to find them in the immediate neighbourhood within 15 to 20 minutes, call 111 and ask for Police.
- Important questions the Police may have include providing a good description of the person, information about past walking, or where the person may have gone eg old neighbourhoods, former workplaces or favourite places.
- Police will arrange for local taxis and public transport to keep a lookout.
- Providing a recent photo will be useful for Police and other searchers.
- Leave someone at home to answer the phone while you search.
- Often people who are still traffic safe follow the same route when out walking. If you know this route and they are longer than expected, it may help lessen the search time as you will know the time they normally take and the routes they follow.

### **When the missing person is found | Ina kitea te tangata ngaro**

- Greet. Reassure. Remain calm.
- Join them – walk with them and gradually move in the direction of home.
- If you are in a car, offer the person a lift.
- Notify all possible 'searchers' when the person has been found, including the police.



# Alzheimers

## New Zealand

### Ki te ngaro tētahi tangata kua pāngia e te mate wareware

#### What to do if a person with dementia mate wareware cannot be located

- Kaua e pōnānā
- Kimihia te tangata i te whare katoa, i ōna taha i waho, me ngā huarahi e mōhiotia ana e ia. Whakamōhiotia ō hoa noho tata, pātai atu mehemea kua kitea te tangata ngaro.
- Whakapā atu ki te tari waka tūroro o tō takiwā me ngā hōhipera, pātai atu mehemea kua kitea te tangata e rātou, e tiakina ana hoki e rātou.
- Mehemea he mōrea ohotata ki te oranga o te tangata (arā, he rā tino kino i waho / e hē ana rānei te tinana) ki te kore rānei e kitea e koe i te takiwā tūtata ki te kāinga i muri i te 15-20 meneti, waea atu ki 111 ka tono ai kia kōrero ki ngā Pirihimana.
- Tērā pea ko ētahi pātai hira a ngā Pirihimana ki a koe, kia hoatu he whakamārama mō te āhua o te tangata, ētahi kōrero hoki mō ōna ara hīkoi i ngā rā ki muri, te wāhi pea kua haerea e te tangata. Hei tauira, ko ngā takiwā noho o mua, ngā wāhi mahi o mua, ngā wāhi kaingakau rānei.
- Mā ngā pirihimana e whakarite kia kimihia te tangata e ngā tēkihi me ngā pahi, tereina hoki o te takiwā.
- He whai tikanga hoki te hoatu i tētahi whakaahua āhua hou o te tangata mā ngā Pirihimana, me ērā atu kairapu.
- Me waiho tētahi tangata i te kāinga kia whakautu i te waea i a koe e rapu ana.
- Ko ngā tāngata he haumaruru tonu ā rātou tikanga hīkoi, ka ū tonu ki taua ara ina haere rātou ki te hīkoi. Ki te mea e mōhio ana koe ki tēnei huarahi, ā, he roa kē atu rātou i tāu i tūmanako ai, ka iti iho pea te roa o te rapunga, nā te mea, kua mōhio kē koe ki te wā ka pau i a rātou i taua hīkoi, me ngā pokanga tika ka whāia e rātou i te ara.

**Links to references provided:**

**Safer walking profile** <https://saferwalking.nz › safer-walking-profile-form>

**Wandersearch** <https://wandersearchnz.org.nz/>

**Safer walking technology** <https://saferwalking.nz/tools-and-technology/>