

WHAT IS ALZHEIMER'S?

Every 65 seconds someone in the United States develops Alzheimer's. Alzheimer's is a type of dementia that causes difficulties with memory, thinking and behavior. It is the most common cause of dementia, a general term for memory loss and cognitive abilities that are serious enough to interfere with daily life. Alzheimer's is a progressive disease, which means symptoms worsen over time. Alzheimer's is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States. After diagnosis, people with Alzheimer's live about four to eight years, but can live up to twenty depending on other factors.



A brain without the disease.



A brain with advanced Alzheimer's.



How the two brains compare.

RISK FACTORS

AGE

Age is the main risk factor for Alzheimer's. Although age increases the risk, it is not the main cause of Alzheimer's

- Family history of Alzheimer's. People with a parent or sibling with the illness are more likely to develop it. This increases when more than one family member also has it
- Genetics may also increase the risk
- Head injury may increase chances of developing dementia
- Heart health may also contribute

WOMEN AND ALZHEIMER'S

Two-thirds of Americans with Alzheimer's are women. 1 in 5 women have a lifetime risk of developing Alzheimer's at the age of 65. Women in their sixties are twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's as they are to develop breast cancer.

Women are also more likely to be caregivers of those living with Alzheimer's. More than three in five unpaid caregivers are women and more than one-third of dementia caregivers are daughters.

Nearly 19% of women Alzheimer's caregivers have had to quit work to become a caregiver or because caregiving duties were too burdensome.

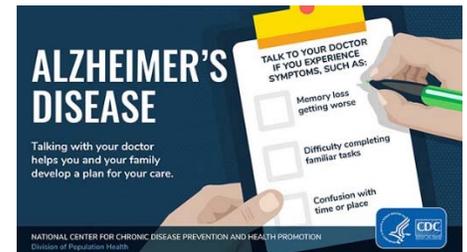
Women caregivers are likely to feel higher levels of depression and impaired health than their male counterparts.

OTHER GROUPS

Older Latinx people are one-and-a-half times as likely as older White people to have Alzheimer's and other types of dementia,

whereas older African-American people are about twice as likely to have the illness.

EARLY BEHAVIORAL SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ALZHEIMER'S



Memory loss that disrupts daily life

- Forgetting information that was recently learned is the most common sign of Alzheimer's, especially during early stages
- Forgetting important dates, asking for information repeatedly, and a need to rely on written information

Challenges in planning or solving problems

- Changes in ability to develop and follow plans, hard time working with numbers, difficulty concentrating

Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, work or at leisure

- Have trouble navigating to a familiar location, maintaining a budget, etc.

Confusion with time or place

- Lose track of dates, seasons and passage of time
- May forget where they are and how they got there

Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships

- Difficulty reading, lack of depth perception, and a hard time determining color

Problems with words, when speaking and writing

- People with Alzheimer's can have difficulty with conversation, they may repeat themselves or forget what they're speaking about

- May struggle with vocabulary. It can be hard for them to find the right word, or they may call things by the wrong name (e.g. calling a watch a hand-clock)

Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps

- They may accuse others of stealing

Decreased or poor judgment

- People with Alzheimer's may use poor judgement when dealing with money and give large amounts to telemarketers
- May pay less attention to grooming and keeping themselves clean

Withdrawal from work or social activities

- Have trouble keeping up with favorite sports teams or remembering how to complete a favorite hobby
- May also avoid being social due to discomfort

Changes in mood or personality

- May become confused, suspicious, depressed, fearful, or anxious

OTHER EARLY SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ALZHEIMER'S

Wandering

Six in ten people with dementia will wander. Someone with Alzheimer's may become disoriented and forget their name and address.

- Reassure the person if they feel lost or abandoned as opposed to correcting them
- Place new door locks or bolts out of sight
- Use device that signals when doors or windows are opened

Sundowning

Problems sleeping and increase in behavioral problems beginning at dusk and last into the night.

- Avoid stimulants and maintain a schedule
- Keep the home well lit

Suspicious and Delusions

Suspicious of those around them, accuse others of theft, infidelity, or other improper behavior.

- Do not take these accusations personally
- Acknowledge beliefs instead of arguing
- Switch the focus

Repetition

The person may do or say something over and over. They may even undo things that are finished. They are probably looking for comfort, or familiarity.

- Maintain patience
- Provide the answer, several times if necessary
- Accept the behavior

Memory Loss and Confusion

Person may not recognize family members, forget relationships, confuse names or become confused by the passing of time.

- Give brief explanations;
- Stay calm
- Offer suggestions instead of correcting them (e.g. I think he is your son Jose.)

Aggression

Can be verbal or physical and can occur suddenly with no apparent reason, or stem from frustration. Could be caused by physical discomfort, environmental factors or poor communication.

- Rule out pain as a cause
- Stay positive, and do not become angry

- If you become increasingly frustrated, walk away for a moment (after ensuring it is safe to do so)

CARING FOR THE CAREGIVER

Caring for a person with Alzheimer's disease is physically and emotionally demanding. Feelings of anger and guilt, stress and discouragement, worry and grief, and social isolation are common.

Caregiving can even take a toll on the caregiver's physical health. Paying attention to your own needs and well-being is one of the most important things you can do for yourself and for the person with Alzheimer's.

If you're a caregiver for someone with Alzheimer's, you can help yourself by:

- Learning as much about the disease as you can
- Asking questions of doctors, social workers and others involved in the care of your loved one
- Calling on friends or other family members for help when you need it
- Taking a break every day
- Spending time with your friends
- Taking care of your health by seeing your own doctors on schedule, eating healthy meals and getting exercise
- Joining a support group
- Making use of a local adult day center, if possible

Many people with Alzheimer's and their families benefit from counseling or local support services. Contact your local Alzheimer's Association affiliate to connect with support groups, doctors, occupational therapists, resources and referrals, home care agencies, residential care facilities, a telephone help line, and educational seminars.

RESOURCES

The [Alzheimer's Association](#) has several supportive programs:

- 24/7 Helpline: 1.800.272.3900
- [Alzheimer's Navigator](#) guide to facing Alzheimer's
- [ALZ Connected](#) online community boards both for caregivers and those with Alzheimer's

CDC has an informative [Alzheimer's Disease and Healthy Aging](#) site

PARTICIPATE

Try the Alzheimer's Association's [Walk to End Alzheimer's](#) throughout the US. Here are NYC dates this fall:

- Brooklyn: September 22, 2019, Kingsborough Community College, 11235.
- Staten Island: October 12, 2019, Clove Lakes Park, 10301.
- Manhattan: October 26, 2019, South Street Seaport, Pier 17 Fulton and South Street Manhattan, NY 10038.

MMWR | KNOW SOMEONE WITH MEMORY LOSS?

SUBJECTIVE COGNITIVE DECLINE IN ADULTS

1 IN 9 ADULTS AGE 45 OR OLDER REPORT CONFUSION OR MEMORY LOSS

50% REPORT ACTIVITY LIMITATIONS:

- COOKING
- CLEANING
- TAKING MEDICATION

MEMORY LOSS IS NOT A NORMAL PART OF AGING

MORE THAN 1/2 OF PEOPLE WITH MEMORY LOSS HAVE NOT TALKED TO A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

TALK TO A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER ABOUT

- POSSIBLE TREATMENT
- CARE PLANNING
- MANAGEMENT OF CHRONIC CONDITIONS
- CAREGIVING NEEDS

Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System data as published in Taylor, MMWR, July 2018. <https://go.usa.gov/uLZ73>

WWW.CDC.GOV

New Estimates of Americans with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Show Racial and Ethnic Disparities

Number of Americans with Alzheimer's Disease Expected to Increase

