

Alzheimer's Disease

life  beats



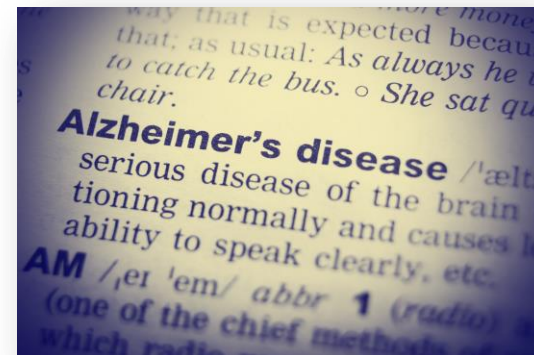
What is Alzheimer's Disease?

Alzheimer's is a progressive brain disease that causes problems with memory, reasoning, behavior and motor skills

- Symptoms of Alzheimer's slowly worsen over time and the disease is ultimately fatal
- Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia, which is defined as a loss of cognitive functioning and behavioral abilities that interfere with daily life

Other forms of dementia include:

- Vascular dementia
- Dementia with Lewy bodies
- Frontotemporal dementia



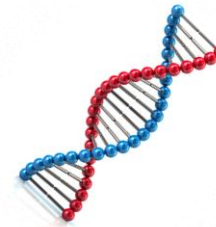
47 million people suffer from Alzheimer's and other Dementias worldwide

Who's at Risk?

- Risk for Alzheimer's increases greatly with age
- After reaching 65, one's risk of developing Alzheimer's doubles every five years
- Almost fifty percent chance of having it by age 85
- Before age of 65, it is known as early/younger-onset Alzheimer's

Research has identified many possible, probable and known risk factors:

1. Age
2. Genetic Factors
 - a. APOE4 gene variant: 1 parent= 4x greater risk & both parents= 10x greater
3. Health
 - a. Cardiovascular health and stroke victims
 - b. Depression and social isolation



Signs and Symptoms – Early Stage

Alzheimer's disease can be difficult to identify in its early stages because memory troubles as we age is normal

The classic distinction with Alzheimer's is difficulty in forming new memories – what will appear to be short-term memory loss

Other early signs include:

- confusion (not recognizing familiar surroundings or becoming easily lost)
- difficulty with words (shrinking vocabulary)
- trouble with basic math.

It is important to remember that this disease affects everyone differently

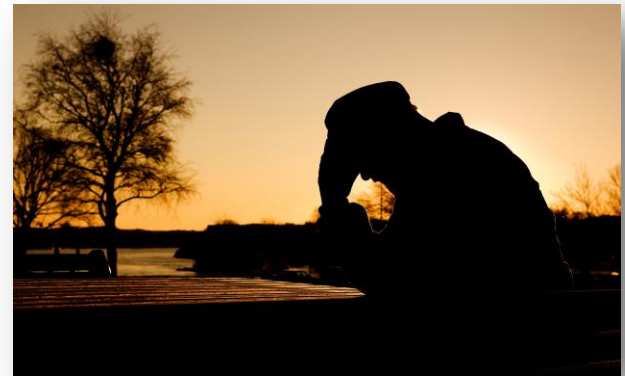
Signs and Symptoms – Middle Stage

The middle stage of the disease will show a worsening of these symptoms:

- loss of reading and writing skills
- difficulty with complex motor tasks
- loss of previously intact long-term memories

It is also more common at this stage to see changes in behavior and personality.

- “*Sundowning*” - increased confusion and unrest in the evening.



Signs and Symptoms – Late Stage

It is important to know that Alzheimer's is a degenerative disease that progressively gets worse over time

What late stages of Alzheimer's looks like:

- Limited language capabilities
- Severe memory loss
- Little mobility



Behavioral changes are generally manifested as apathy and inactivity. People with late-stage Alzheimer's are completely reliant on caregivers

Treatment for Alzheimer's

Currently, no treatment for Alzheimer's is able to stop or even slow down the disease process

Approved drugs aim to lessen symptoms and only work for a limited amount of time, for a limited number of people

As a result, managing Alzheimer's involves a combination of efforts:

- Medication – limited relief
- Assistance of a caregiver
- Careful monitoring of symptoms
- Making lifestyle choices based on the patient's needs
 - Encouraging daily exercise such as a half-hour walk
 - Encouraging a healthy diet; as people with Alzheimer's may lose interest in food, cooking and even forgetting to eat
 - Help maintain a stimulating social environment

Special Considerations and Resources

Because current medications offer limited relief from symptoms, managing Alzheimer's disease involves the dedicated help of a caregiver, a person who can provide assistance, guidance and comfort to the Alzheimer's patient.

- Trained medical personnel
- Family member – a child, sibling, or spouse.

Resources:

1. [Therapeutics](#)
2. [Global Alzheimer's Platform](#)
3. [Caregiving](#)
4. [The Healthy Brain Initiative – CDC \(PDF\)](#)
5. [World Alzheimer's Report 2015](#)

