

Alzheimer's Awareness Month



Did You Know?

- Alzheimer's disease is the 6th leading cause of death in the United States.
- As many as 5.5 million Americans are living with this disease.
- Alzheimer's has three different stages. Signs and symptoms become more severe with each stage and eventually death occurs.
- One may experience abnormal sexual behavior, aggression, agitation, delusions, or wandering.
- Age is the best known risk factor but family history can also play a role.
- There is no cure for Alzheimer's but there are pharmaceutical options for managing symptoms and care planning.

Alzheimer's Disease

Alzheimer's is the most common diagnosis of dementia. It is a progressive and relentless loss of mental function revolving around memory, language, and thought. The cause of Alzheimer's is not known but there are theories that it can be caused by chemical deficiencies, genetic factors, the body attacking its own immune system, viruses, or defective blood vessels in the brain. There are 3 stages of this disease. Individuals in Stage 1 can generally manage their daily activities themselves, but they may require some assistance with organization. In Stage 2 individuals may have more problems taking care of themselves, but they can still be involved in their daily care and follow a routine. In the final stage, individuals usually require complete assistance with daily care.

Symptoms of Alzheimer's:

- ❖ Problems remembering conversations
- ❖ Forgetting where objects have been placed
- ❖ Routine tasks, which require thought, become more difficult
- ❖ Difficulty responding to simple problems
- ❖ Becoming lost in familiar surroundings
- ❖ Difficulty finding the appropriate words
- ❖ Problems paying attention
- ❖ Less responsive
- ❖ Feeling sad, anxious, or depressed
- ❖ Loss of impulse control

Caring for Seniors with Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementia



TIPS

-Create a supportive environment by:

- Providing extra security measures such as posting notes to serve as reminders (turn stove off)
- Keeping the environment familiar (don't move furniture around)
- Establish and maintain a regular daily routine
- Keep the client oriented (clock, calendar, radio, night light)

-Evaluate home for safety and take corrective actions by

- Removing scatter rugs
- Storing household cleaners and harmful substances in a safe place
- Removing sharp & breakable objects from the environment
- Using plastic eating and drinking utensils

-Provide structure and routine

-Schedule less stress activities

-Encourage them to share their memories, as long as they can recall them

-Speak slowly and clearly to facilitate their understanding of what is being said

Communication: Choose simple words, speak gently, minimize noise in background, don't interrupt, call the person by their name, & frame questions in a positive way.

Bathing: Develop a routine and plan bath or shower time at the same time when person is calmest. Be gentle and respectful and tell them what you are doing step by step.

Eating: Maintain familiar mealtime routines, and serve small portions or several meals throughout day. Choose dishes and eating tools that promote independence. Encourage them to drink plenty of liquids.

Activities: Break activities up into smaller steps so no frustration occurs. Simple activities are often the best.

Exercise: Start slowly and build the exercises up. Just going outside for a walk is a good start. Allow independence and look into exercise programs offered in the area.

Source: <https://www.nia.nih.gov>
<https://www.alz.org>

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