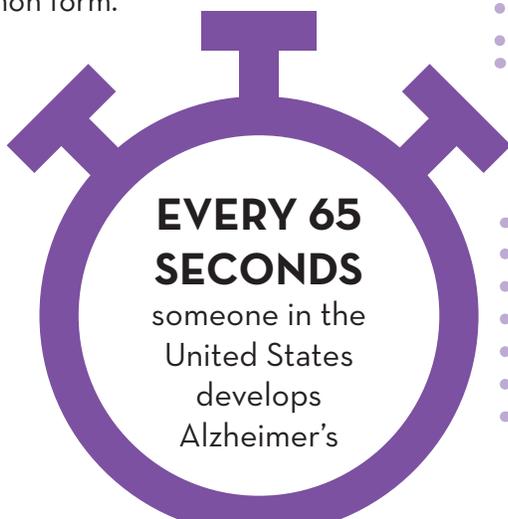


Identifying ALZHEIMER'S AND DEMENTIA in Your Loved One

Understanding that your loved one may have a form of dementia can be a difficult and trying time.

DEMENTIA is a generalized term for a **mental decline** which is **severe enough** to interfere with daily life.

It impairs mental functions such as memory, thinking, and reasoning. While there is no single test that can diagnose a person, it's vital to identify and become aware of the symptoms attributed to dementia. There are various cases of dementia and on average, Alzheimer's accounts for 60 to 80 percent of cases, while Vascular dementia (which occurs after a stroke) is the second most common form.



Dementia can manifest differently in each person effected and symptoms can vary greatly. The Alzheimer's Association, the leading advocate for Alzheimer's and dementia, lists the ten early signs and symptoms of Alzheimer's as:

1.

Memory loss that disrupts daily life

2.

Challenges in planning or solving problems

3.

Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, work or during leisure

4.

Confusion with time or place

5.

Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships

6.

New problems with words in speaking or writing

7.

Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps

8.

Decreased or poor judgment

9.

Withdrawal from work or social activities

10.

Changes in mood and personality

While many people experience memory loss issues in aging, this does not necessarily mean that they have Alzheimer's or another form of dementia. Once symptoms have been identified as possible dementia, it's necessary to go through a careful medical evaluation from a licensed doctor.

Encouraging your loved one to seek medical help may be difficult but it's crucial to diagnosis.

Doctors can diagnose dementia and Alzheimer's through a careful look at medical history, physical examination, neurological exam, laboratory tests, everyday behavior, and function.

Once successfully evaluated, Doctors can determine that a person has dementia with a high level of certainty. It's hard to determine the exact type of dementia because the symptoms and brain changes of different dementias can overlap. In some cases, a doctor may diagnose "dementia" and not specify a type. In this case, it may be necessary to see a specialist such as a neurologist or geropsychologist.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, there are **7 Stages of Alzheimer's:**

- 1 No Impairment.**
- 2 Very Mild Decline.** Normal age-related changes or early signs of Alzheimer's.
- 3 Mild Decline.** Friends and Family begin to notice difficulties in memory or concentration. Noticeable problems coming up with the right name or word.
- 4 Moderate Cognitive Decline.** Able to detect clear cut symptoms. Forgetfulness of recent events.
- 5 Moderately Severe Cognitive Decline.** Gaps in memory and thinking are noticeable, need help with daily activities. Unable to recall their address or high school they attended.
- 6 Severe Cognitive Decline.** Personality changes, require extensive help with daily activities. Lose awareness of recent experiences & their surroundings.
- 7 Very Severe Cognitive Decline.** Individuals lose the ability to respond to their environment, carry a conversation or control their movement.

