Understanding

Alzheimer's Disease & Dementia

Alzheimer's is a disease that slowly and continuously destroys thinking skills, memory and (eventually) the ability to carry out the simple tasks that many take for granted every day. Symptoms usually appear in a person's mid-60s and is the most common cause of dementia among senior adults, affecting an estimated 5.3 million Americans. Everyone's brain is at risk for Alzheimer's disease.

Characteristics of Alzheimer's Disease: The Early Stages

Disorientation (

They may get lost in the most familiar locations even their own home. They may be unable to follow simple directions to get to a store or appointments. The current date and time are forgotten as the disease progresses.

Anomia

Trying to find the right word(s) can become an impossible task. They may forget names of familiar people and things. They may use other words in their place. This creates what some call "word salad."

Trouble with routines 🧿

They may forget daily routines like preparing a meal, paying bills or using a telephone.

Memory loss

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People with Alzheimer's disease have problems recalling events from a few minutes ago to a few hours ago (short-term memory loss) - their long-term memories may be intact. They may ask the same question over and over, get "lost" in a simple conversation and misplace personal belongings.

0 **Apraxia**

People with Alzheimer's may forget how to use a fork, knife, tools and even a toothbrush.

Personality changes

As the disease progresses your loved one may become more challenging. Behaviors change, and he or she may become more withdrawn, frustrated, irritable, sensitive, inconsiderate and possibly violent.

O Decline in grooming

Often, one of the first signs that something is wrong is a decline in a loved one's grooming habits. A previously well-groomed and clean person may now begin wearing the same clothes several days in a row, become unshaven, have uncombed hair and have an unkempt look.

Middle Stages

Poor shortterm memory After they finish eating,

know: "When do we eat?"

your loved one may want to

skilled movements Early learned skills like tying a shoelace, brushing teeth or

Inability to perform

eating with a fork are forgotten.

Social withdrawl

Loved one may become totally and socially dependent upon primary caregiver. They may experience depression or be awkward in new groups of people.











Person, place, and their time: Your loved one may not know their relationship to you, know where they are or think the

Disorientation

time-frame is 40+ years ago.

Speech becomes jumbled or slow, words are forgotten or ideas cannot be expressed correctly.

They may make comments that are inappropriate, rude or even cruel. They may decide to undress in public setting.

Fewer

inhibitions

agitated, anxious and unable to express his/her needs when encountering a confusing situation or idea.

Your loved one may become angry,

Agitation and

discomposure

In Alzheimer's stage 2, your loved one may become restless, unable to sit for more than a few moments, may wander, rummage,

pace and be constantly on the move.

Restlessness, fidgeting,

pacing, or wandering











just sleep, become slow-moving, sit down and suddenly fall asleep, or even fall asleep during a meal.

They may want to shut down and

Need for assistance

There is an increased need for assistance with

prompting, cueing and supervision. They may

not be able to initiate their own activities.

Alzheimer's disease. People will need

no daytime naps or rest time. Days and nights may become confused and switched.

Assistive devices

Loved ones may forget that they need

dentures, eyeglasses or hearing aides.

Others may only sleep two to six hours per day with

This is a term associated with confusion, agitation and increased activity. Your loved one may be looking for something to do.

Sundowning



(whether it is appropriate or not). Consequently, they may experience weight gain or loss. Sometimes this

behavior can be a side-effect from a

really there. Hallucinations involving sight or hearing are the most common. Delusions are fixed false beliefs or ideas. It is usually the result of a disease process like Alzheimer's or psychiatric illness.

Late Stages

night and want to sleep all day.

Upset sleep cycle

Medication-assisted sleep may be

needed, or they could be awake all

serves as the memory.

Little or no memory Short and long-term memory is severely impaired. The caregiver

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ongoing and respectful caregiving at this

Difficulty communicating

Loved one may be unable to speak or understand words. However, a smile is

always appropriate and a gentle touch.

Non-verbal communication is vital for

No recognition of family and friends

recognize.

all activities.

Increased frailty

Muscle weakness, aspiration

infections can be a problem

pneumonia, flu, and other

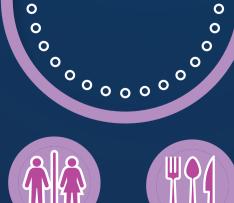
in the late stages.

coordinated

movements

Difficulty with





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Need for assistance Loved one will need ongoing

Individual may not recognize himself in

the mirror. He may think it is another

out. He may also think that a spouse,

person and start a conversation or lash

sibling, or parent is a stranger he doesn't

supervision, assistance, and direction for

walker or cane. Careful monitoring may be needed as they may be unable to grasp objects for support. Fall potentials

are increased. Broken bones, like hips, may prove fatal.

Loss of bowel and/or bladder control

to the bathroom.

Loved one may not be able to control muscles or even realize they need to go

Using a utensil to bring food to one's mouth, biting, chewing, swallowing and the sensation of hunger may be forgotten. As a result, weight-loss may occur.

how to eat

Difficulty remembering

Nutritional supplements, appetite enhancers, snacks and easy to digest foods may be considered at this

We're here to help.

Our purposeful programing and community design is safe and stimulating. We research with family members to learn about your loved one's career, retirement, and special interests. Elements of individual life experiences are interwoven into the daily schedule. Stop by one of our Memory Care communities or call today to find answers and solutions with our Memory Care specialists.