10 WARNING SIGNS OF ALZHEIMER’S

An education program presented by the Alzheimer’s Association®
10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer’s Participant’s Guide

Introduction

Learning Objectives

- Describe typical age-related memory, thinking or behavior changes.
- Recognize common warning signs of Alzheimer’s and dementia.
- Discuss the tips for approaching someone about memory concerns.
- Explain the importance of early detection and benefits of diagnosis.
- Identify possible tests and assessments for the diagnostic process.
- Name the resources available through the Alzheimer’s Association.
10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer’s
1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life
2. Challenges in planning or solving problems
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks
4. Changes in the ability to understand or use spoken or written language
5. Trouble understanding visual images or spatial relationships
6. New problems with words in speaking or writing
7. Mistrusting things others say or do
8. Decreased or poor judgment
9. Withdrawal from work or social activities
10. Changes in mood and personality

What are possible signs of dementia?
One of the most common signs of Alzheimer's is forgetting recently learned information. Others include:
- Forgetting important dates or events.
- Asking the same questions over and over.
- Increasingly relying on memory aids (e.g., reminder notes) or family members to help with tasks.

What's a typical age-related change?
Sometimes forgetting names or appointments, but remembering them later.

2. Challenges in planning or solving problems

What are possible signs of dementia?
Some people may experience changes in their ability to develop and follow a plan or work with numbers, which may result in:
- Trouble following a familiar recipe or keeping track of monthly bills.
- Difficulty concentrating and taking much longer to complete tasks.

What's a typical age-related change?
Making occasional errors when managing finances or household bills.
What are possible signs of dementia?

People living with dementia commonly have difficulty completing daily tasks, such as:
- Driving to a familiar location.
- Organizing a grocery list.
- Remembering the rules of a favorite game.

What's a typical age-related change?

Occasionally needing help to use the settings on a microwave or to record a television show.

What are possible signs of dementia?

People living with Alzheimer's or other dementias can lose track of dates, seasons and the passage of time. They may:
- Have trouble understanding something if it is not happening immediately.
- Forget where they are or how they got there.

What's a typical age-related change?

Getting confused about the day of the week, but figuring it out later.

What are possible signs of dementia?

For some people, having vision problems is a sign of dementia, which may lead to:
- Difficulty with balance.
- Trouble reading.
- Problems judging distance and determining color or contrast, which may cause issues with driving.

What's a typical age-related change?

Vision changes related to cataracts.
6. New problems with words in speaking or writing

What are possible signs of dementia?
People living with Alzheimer’s may have trouble following or joining a conversation. They may:
- Stop in the middle of a conversation and have no idea how to continue.
- Repeat themselves.
- Struggle with vocabulary.
- Have trouble naming a familiar object or use the wrong name.

What’s a typical age-related change?
Sometimes having trouble finding the right word.

7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retracing steps

What are possible signs of dementia?
A person living with Alzheimer’s may put things in unusual places. He or she may:
- Lose things and be unable to go back over their steps to find them.
- Accuse others of stealing, which may occur more frequently over time.

What’s a typical age-related change?
Misplacing things from time to time and retracing steps to find them.

8. Decreased or poor judgment

What are possible signs of dementia?
People living with Alzheimer’s may experience changes in judgment or decision-making. They may:
- Use poor judgment when dealing with money.
- Pay less attention to grooming or keeping themselves clean.

What’s a typical age-related change?
Making a bad decision or mistake once in a while, like neglecting to change the oil in the car.
What are possible signs of dementia?
A person living with dementia may experience changes in the ability to hold or follow a conversation. As a result, he or she may:
- Withdraw from hobbies, social activities, or other engagements.
- Have trouble keeping up with a favorite team or activity.

What's a typical age-related change?
Sometimes feeling uninterested in family or social engagements.

What are possible signs of dementia?
People living with dementia may experience mood and personality changes, such as:
- Becoming confused, suspicious, depressed, fearful or anxious.
- Getting easily upset at home with friends or when out of their comfort zone.

What's a typical age-related change?
Developing very specific ways of doing things and becoming irritable when a routine is disrupted.

Interpreting signs and deciding next steps
10 Signs of Alzheimer’s Recap

- These 10 signs are a guide to identify problems that may be related to Alzheimer’s.
- Individuals may experience one or multiple warning signs in varying degrees—but they don’t have to experience them all for there to be concern.
- If you notice any of these signs in yourself or someone else, it’s important to see a doctor.
The Importance of Early Detection

Friends and family are often the first to notice changes.

What should you do if you notice changes in someone?
1. What changes in memory, thinking or behavior do you see?

2. What else is going on?
3
Learn about the signs and the benefits of early diagnosis.

Assess the situation

4
Has anyone else noticed the change(s)?

Assess the situation

Have a conversation
5. Who should have the conversation to discuss concerns?

6. What is the best time and place to have the conversation?

7. What will you or the person having the conversation say?
8. Offer to go with the person to the doctor.

9. If needed, have multiple conversations.

Reach out for support.
10

Turn to the Alzheimer’s Association for information and support.

Reach out for support

See a doctor

Most people address concerns about memory, thinking or behavior with their primary care physician. However, in some cases, the primary care physician will refer the person to see a specialist for further evaluation.

Specialists may include:
- Geriatrician
- Neurologist
- Neuropsychologist
- Psychiatrist
- Psychologist

See a doctor
What are the benefits of early detection?

Importance of Early Detection Recap

- Pay attention to any changes in memory, thinking or behavior that you notice in people.
- If you see changes that are unusual for the person, take action by having a conversation.
- Discussing these types of concerns can be difficult; consider using the 10 Steps to Approach Memory Concerns as a guide.
- There are a number of benefits to early detection, including planning for the future, access to treatments for symptoms and participation in clinical studies.
Seeking a Diagnosis

There is currently no way to diagnose Alzheimer’s disease.

Possible assessments and tests:
- Medical history
- Physical exam
- Screen for depression
- Interview with close companion
- Tests may include:
  - Laboratory tests
  - Mental cognitive status tests
  - Brain imaging
Do dementia-like symptoms always result in a diagnosis of Alzheimer's or another dementia?

Appointments have been going well. Mum's handling them OK.

Think it's really dementia?

G'onna we won't know until we get a diagnosis, but let's ask Dr. Sellaway if it could possibly be anything else.
Seeking a Diagnosis Recap

- The diagnostic experience may vary from person to person.
- Something other than Alzheimer's or another dementia could be causing the symptoms.
- Stigma and misconceptions about the disease — like believing that nothing can be done — can prevent some people from seeking a diagnosis.

What's next when the diagnosis is Alzheimer's?

I called, but got your voicemail. How's it go?

Call you later when I get home, but the diagnosis is early-stage Alzheimer's.

Oh no. What do we do now?

Doc said the Alzheimer's Association offers free resources, some even help people live well with the disease. Will call soon, but felt rush off with some hope.
Alzheimer’s Association

About the Alzheimer’s Association

Our mission:
The Alzheimer’s Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer’s care, support and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer’s disease through the advancement of research, to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health.

Our vision is a world without Alzheimer’s disease.

800.272.3900 | alz.org

Alzheimer’s Association Key Resources

We’re available wherever and whenever you need reliable information and support.

- On the phone – 24/7 Helpline, 800.272.3900
- Online – alz.org
- In communities nationwide – alz.org/CRF
Alzheimer’s Association Resources

- Call the 24/7 Helpline (800.272.3900). Care specialists and master’s-level clinicians provide reliable information and support all day, every day.
- Visit alz.org®, a robust repository of up-to-date dementia-related information and resources.
- Join ALZConnected® (alzconnected.org), our free online community, to connect with other caregivers or people living with dementia.
- Explore the Alzheimer’s Association & AARP Community Resource Finder (alz.org/CRF) to locate dementia and aging-related resources and services in your area, including your local Association office.
- Assess your needs and create customized action plans with Alzheimer’s Navigator® (alzheimersnavigator.org).
- Check out alz.org/research to learn more about Alzheimer’s and other dementias and the Association’s involvement in advancing the field of research.
- Go to alz.org/publications to access our catalog of brochures and topic sheets covering a variety of dementia-related topics.

For people living with dementia:

- Visit alz.org/IHaveAlz to start learning and planning in order to live your best life today.
- Access LiveWell Online Resources (alz.org/livewell) for free interactive tools and personalized steps for living well with the disease.
- Take our free Living with Alzheimer’s: For People with Alzheimer’s workshop online at alz.org/education or through your local Alzheimer’s Association office (alz.org/CRF).

For caregivers:

- Find support and information for all stages of the disease at alz.org/care.
- Visit alz.org/safety for a comprehensive offering of safety information, tips and resources.
- Take our free Living with Alzheimer’s: For Caregivers workshop series online at alz.org/education or through your local Alzheimer’s Association office (alz.org/CRF).

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