

Fast Facts

Alzheimer's

- Progressive disease, impacts memory and other important mental functions
- Most common cause of dementia (a group brain disorders associated with the loss of intellectual and social skills)
- Causes brain cells to degenerate and eventually die over time
- Decreases connections between the surviving brain cells

Two significant brain abnormalities:

- clumps of protein, beta-amyloid, (plaques) that damage and destroy brain cells in several ways by collecting on the outside brain of the cells
- present of tangles in the thread of protein, tau, that disrupt the internal support and a transport system that carries nutrients and other materials throughout long extensions in the brain causing the transport system not to function

<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Prevention</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increased forgetfulness -Mild confusion -Decreased memory (recent events first, then forget who people/things are) -Repetitive questions/statements -Routinely misplacing things -Inability to care for oneself -Lose ability of reasoning and decision making -Dramatic personality changes (withdrawing away from others, mood swings, irritability/aggressiveness, wandering and delusions) 	<p>Two types of medications (slow the rate at which symptoms advance):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Cholinesterase inhibitors (Aricept, Razadyne or Exelon) -Namenda <p>Create a safe and supportive environment by establishing a routine and decreasing memory-demanding tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Keep important things (keys, wallet, etc.) in the same place -Set up autopayment for financial obligations -Change medication doses to once daily, if possible -Schedule appointments for the same time/same day of the week -Use a calendar to track daily schedule -Encourage person to carry a phone that has location capability -Reduce clutter (loose rugs), install handrails and wear shoes with good traction -Remove most of the mirrors -Keep photographs and other meaningful objects around the house -Listening to person talk about their memories and feelings <p>Note for caregivers, it is vital that you take care of yourself:</p>	<p>-Currently none</p> <p>-A strong association between the risk for heart disease and a risk for Alzheimer's. So, decrease risk for both by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Not smoking -Decrease exposure to secondhand smoke -Manage weight, blood pressure, cholesterol levels and Diabetes type 2 -Get plenty of exercise -Have a diet that includes fruits and vegetables -Engage in activities that are mentally and socially stimulating

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Take a break daily-Spend time with friends-Take care of your own health-Go to a support group-Have alone time-Learn as much as you can about the disease-Talk to person's doctors-Ask for help from others-Make use of adult day care centers	
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