

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

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