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the basics

memory loss, dementia
and alzheimer's disease



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The impact of Alzheimer's disease

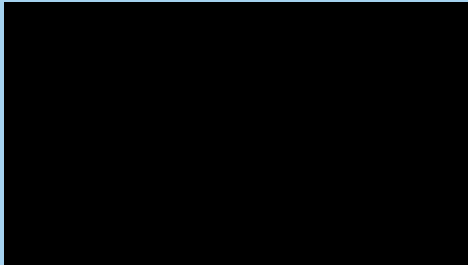


Ron Petersen, MD, PhD, is Director of the Mayo Alzheimer's Disease Research Center.

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The impact of Alzheimer's disease



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Typical changes

- Typical age-related changes involve:
 - Making a bad decision once in a while
 - Missing an occasional monthly payment
 - Forgetting which day it is and remembering later
 - Sometimes forgetting which word to use
 - Losing things from time to time

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Problematic changes



Joyce has a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease.

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Problematic changes



Joyce has a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease.

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Problematic changes

1. Memory changes that disrupt daily life
2. Challenges in planning or solving problems
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks
4. Confusion with time or place
5. Trouble with 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

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What is dementia?

- Loss of cognitive functioning serious enough to interfere with daily functioning
- Causes changes in:
 - Memory
 - Language
 - Thought
 - Navigation
 - Behavior
 - Personality/Mood
 - Planning and Organizing

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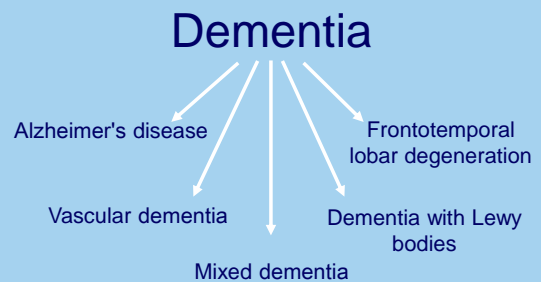
Reversible diseases that mimic dementia

Metabolic disorders (e.g., hypothyroidism)
 Brain tumors
 Dehydration
 Emotional disorders
 Sensory loss
 Vitamin deficiencies (e.g., B12 deficiency)
 Infections
 Alcohol, drugs, medication interactions

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Understanding dementia



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More rare types of dementia



Other more rare dementias include:

- Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease
- Parkinson's disease
- Huntington's disease
- Normal pressure hydrocephalus
- Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome

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Mild Cognitive Impairment

- Severe enough to show up on tests
- Not severe enough to affect daily life
- Increases risk of developing Alzheimer's disease



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Problematic changes



Steve has a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia.

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Problematic changes



Steve has a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia.

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What is Alzheimer's disease?

Alzheimer's disease:

- is a brain disorder
- is a progressive disease
- is the most common form of dementia
- has no cure
- is eventually fatal
- affects over 5 million Americans

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How the brain works

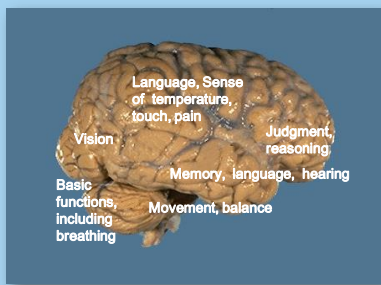
- There are 100 billion nerve cells, or neurons, creating a branching network.
- Signals traveling through the neuron forest form memories, thoughts and feelings
- Alzheimer's disease destroys neurons



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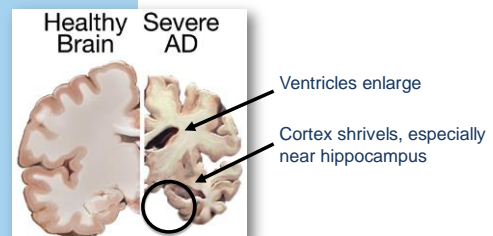
Which functions are affected?



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Healthy vs. Alzheimer's brain

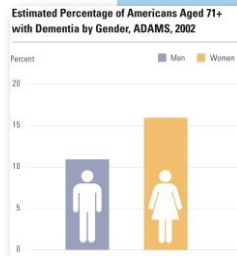


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Major risk factors

- The primary risk factor is age
- The incidence is higher in women largely due to women living longer
- Down syndrome is correlated with Alzheimer's
- Family history can increase risk
- There are two categories of genes

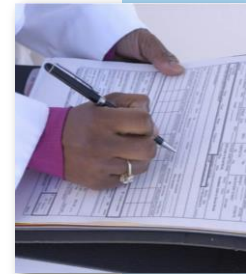


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Selecting a Doctor

- Doctors can diagnosis Alzheimer's disease with accuracy
- Start with:
 - A physician who is experienced with diagnosing Alzheimer's
- Then consult the following as needed:
 - Geriatrician
 - Neurologist
 - Psychiatrist
 - Neuropsychologist



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Preparing for the doctor's visit

- Keep a log
 - Write a list of symptoms, be specific
 - Include when, how often and where
 - Develop the list with input from other family members
- List current and previous health problems
- Bring all medication (prescriptions, vitamins, herbal supplements and over the counter medication)

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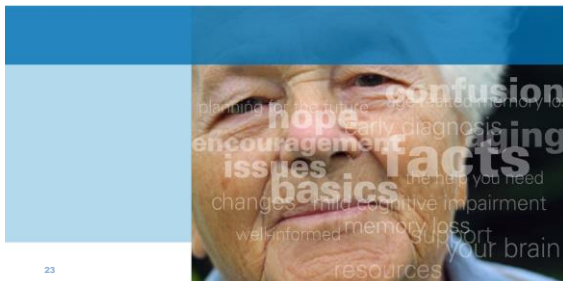
Steps in the assessment

1. Medical history
2. Mental status evaluation
3. Series of evaluations that test memory, reasoning, visual-motor coordination and language skills
4. Physical examination, which includes:
 - Evaluating blood pressure, nutrition and pulse
 - Testing nervous system functions like sensation and balance
 - A brain scan to rule out a stroke
 - Lab tests to rule out other disorders
5. Psychiatric evaluation, to rule out emotional causes of symptoms
6. Interviews with family to get more information about changes

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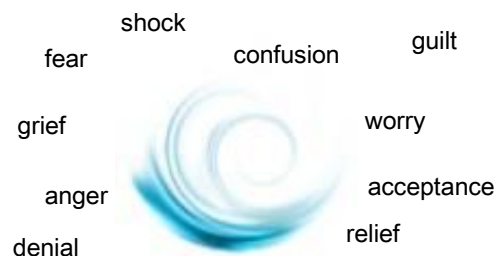
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When the diagnosis is Alzheimer's disease...



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Emotions run high



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Stages of Alzheimer's disease

- Early Stage
 - Recent memory loss
 - Difficulty managing money, driving, or handling social situations
- Middle Stage
 - Difficulty with language
 - Problems keeping track of personal items
 - May need help with grooming
- Late Stage
 - Long- and short-term memory affected
 - Needs care around the clock



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Plan early

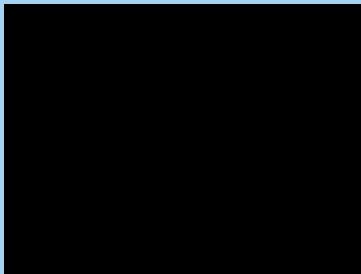


Monica Parker, MD, is a Geriatric Medicine specialist at Emory University.

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Plan early



Monica Parker, MD, is a Geriatric Medicine specialist at Emory University.

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Plan early

- Be an active partner in long-term care plan
- Develop a relationship with your healthcare team
- Get legal and financial issues in order
- Grow a support system
- Educate yourself about the disease

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Medications to treat symptoms

- Cholinesterase inhibitors for mild to moderate symptoms
 - Donepezil (Aricept®)
 - Rivastigmine (Exelon®)
 - Galantamine (Razadyne®)
- NMDA receptor antagonist (glutamate regulator) for moderate to severe symptoms
 - Memantine (Namenda®)

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Medications to treat symptoms



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Clinical research studies



- Clinical trials fuel progress toward treatments
- Participants receive a high standard of care

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Contact us - we can help



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- Alzheimer's Navigator
- Community Resource Finder
- ALZConnected
- Alzheimer's and Dementia Caregiver Center
- Safety Center



alz.org/findus

- Support groups, education programs and more available in communities nationwide



training.alz.org

- Free online education programs available at training.alz.org



800.272.3900

- 24/7 Helpline – Available all day every day

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Get involved



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Build Your Community



Betsy's partner, John, has a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease.

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Build Your Community



Betsy's partner, John, has a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease.

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