

Introduction to Dementia

10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's Disease

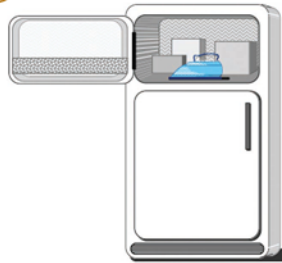
1. Disorientation of Time & Place

- Forgetting the birth date of a child
 - Recalling an event from the past as if it just happened
- Getting lost in or near one's own home
- Getting lost on the way to a familiar place, like church or the grocery store



2. Misplacing Things

- Putting things away in inappropriate places, like putting an iron in the freezer
- Losing track of your keys and not understanding what they are used for when you find them again



3. Mood Swings

- Rapid and extreme mood swings--from calm to tears to anger in just a few minutes

4. Problems with Abstract Thinking

- Having trouble making simple calculations, like counting out change
- Forgetting what numbers are and what to do with them



5. Difficulty Performing Familiar Tasks

- Not recognizing a common object or its use
- Not understanding that something in the store must be purchased before it can be used

6. Problems with Language

- Forgetting simple words like "cat"
- Substituting a word that is not quite appropriate, such as "friend" when referring to a pet

7. Loss of Initiative

- Lacking the motivation to perform even simple tasks, such as getting dressed or preparing food



8. Memory Loss

- Everyone forgets things, and then can recall them later; those with Alzheimer's forget and do not recall, which affects their job performance and activities of daily living

9. Poor or Weaker Judgement

- Driving the wrong way down a one-way street
- Leaving the stove lit
- Withdrawing money from the bank and leaving it on the bank counter

10. Personality Changes

- Drastic changes, such as becoming irritable, fearful, or suspicious
- "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde"



Not All Dementia is Alzheimer's Disease

What is Dementia?

Dementia is a symptom, not a disease. Dementia is a decline in intellectual abilities from previous abilities that is sufficient to impair everyday activities.

What is Alzheimer's?

Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia in the elderly. It is caused by the abnormal accumulation of proteins in the brain that impair brain function. These proteins, beta-amyloid and tau, cause plaques and tangles.

What are Other Causes of Dementia?

There are more than 80 causes of dementia. Some of the more common are frontotemporal dementia, dementia with Lewy bodies, Parkinson's disease, vascular dementia caused by stroke, and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. Each dementing disease has its own typical symptoms and course. Unfortunately, most are progressive and treatments are only modestly effective.



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