

## 10 warning signs of Alzheimer's disease®

Memory loss that disrupts everyday life is not a normal part of aging. It is a symptom of dementia, a gradual and progressive decline in memory, thinking and reasoning skills. The most common cause of dementia is Alzheimer's disease, a disorder that results in the loss of brain cells.

The Alzheimer's Association, the world leader in Alzheimer research and support, has developed a checklist of common symptoms to help recognize the warning signs of Alzheimer's disease.

- 1 Memory loss
- 2 Difficulty performing familiar tasks
- 3 Problems with language
- 4 Disorientation to time and place
- 5 Poor or decreased judgment
- 6 Problems with abstract thinking
- 7 Misplacing things
- 8 Changes in mood or behavior
- 9 Changes in personality
- 10 Loss of initiative

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## 10 warning signs What's considered normal and what's not

### 1 Memory loss

Forgetting recently learned information is one of the most common early signs of dementia. A person begins to forget more often and is unable to recall the information later.

**What's normal?** Forgetting names or appointments occasionally

### 2 Difficulty performing familiar tasks

People with dementia often find it hard to plan or complete everyday tasks. Individuals may lose track of the steps to prepare a meal, place a telephone call or play a game.

**What's normal?** Occasionally forgetting why you came into a room or what you planned to say

### 3 Problems with language

People with Alzheimer's disease often forget simple words or substitute unusual words, making their speech or writing hard to understand. They may be unable to find the toothbrush, for example, and instead ask for "that thing for my mouth."

**What's normal?** Sometimes having trouble finding the right word

### 4 Disorientation to time and place

People with Alzheimer's disease can become lost in their own neighborhoods, forget where they are and how they got there, and not know how to get back home.

**What's normal?** Forgetting the day of the week or where you were going

### 5 Poor or decreased judgment

Those with Alzheimer's may dress inappropriately, wearing several layers on a warm day or little clothing in the cold. They may show poor judgment about money, like giving away large sums to telemarketers.

**What's normal?** Making a questionable or debatable decision from time to time

### 6 Problems with abstract thinking

Someone with Alzheimer's disease may have unusual difficulty performing complex mental tasks, like forgetting what numbers are and how they should be used.

**What's normal?** Finding it challenging to balance a checkbook

### 7 Misplacing things

A person with Alzheimer's disease may put things in unusual places: an iron in the freezer or a wristwatch in the sugar bowl.

**What's normal?** Misplacing keys or a wallet temporarily

### 8 Changes in mood or behavior

Someone with Alzheimer's disease may show rapid mood swings – from calm to tears to anger – for no apparent reason.

**What's normal?** Occasionally feeling sad or moody

### 9 Changes in personality

The personalities of people with dementia can change dramatically. They may become extremely confused, suspicious, fearful or dependent on a family member.

**What's normal?** People's personalities do change somewhat with age

### 10 Loss of initiative

A person with Alzheimer's disease may become very passive, sitting in front of the TV for hours, sleeping more than usual or not wanting to do usual activities.

**What's normal?** Sometimes feeling weary of work or social obligations

Get the best health care for memory loss by  
"Partnering With Your Doctor."

Contact the Alzheimer's Association  
for information about this educational workshop.

## Why can't I remember her name? Is memory loss a normal part of aging?

Everyone forgets a name or misplaces keys occasionally. Many healthy people are less able to remember certain kinds of information as they get older.

The symptoms of Alzheimer's disease are much more severe than such simple memory lapses. Alzheimer symptoms progress, affecting communication, learning, thinking and reasoning. Eventually they have an impact on a person's work and social life.

### What's the difference?

Someone with Alzheimer symptoms	Someone with normal age-related memory changes
Forgets entire experiences	Forgets part of an experience
Rarely remembers later	Often remembers later
Is gradually unable to follow written/spoken directions	Is usually able to follow written/spoken directions
Is gradually unable to use notes as reminders	Is usually able to use notes as reminders
Is gradually unable to care for self	Is usually able to care for self

If you or someone you know is experiencing these symptoms, consult a physician today. Early and accurate diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or other dementias is an important step to getting the right treatment, care and support.

For reliable information and support,  
contact the Alzheimer's Association:

**1.800.272.3900**

**www.alz.org**

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