

September is World Alzheimer Month

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Have you ever walked into a room to get something and then forgot what it was you were going to get? It's a normal part of aging to forget things from time to time. Memory loss that disrupts daily life, however, is not a typical part of aging. It may be a sign of Alzheimer's, a fatal brain disease that causes a slow decline in memory, thinking and reasoning skills.

Over 5.4 million Americans live with Alzheimer's disease. The most common risk factors are age and family history. The majority of people diagnosed with Alzheimer's are over 65 years of age. Your risk doubles every 5 years after age 65 and 50% of people over 85 years have Alzheimer's disease.

Here are the 10 most common warning signs of Alzheimer's Disease. Every individual may experience one or more of these signs in different degrees. If you notice any of these warning signs occurring on a regular basis, please see your health care provider for further evaluation.

Source: Alzheimer's Association

	Typical Age-Related Changes	Warning Signs of Alzheimer's
Memory loss that disrupts daily life	Occasionally forgetting appointments or names of people you briefly met and remembering them later	Forgetting recently learned information; asking the same information over and over again
Inability to solve problems	Making an occasional error when balancing a checkbook	Being unable to track monthly bills, balance a checkbook or follow a familiar recipe
Difficulty completing familiar tasks	Forgetting how to record a TV show or program the microwave for a setting you don't use very often	Forgetting how to drive to or from the local supermarket or how to play a favorite card game or what an eating utensil is used for
Confusion with time or place	Getting mixed up with what day of the week it is and figuring it out later	Losing track of dates, time and seasons; not remembering where you are or how you got there
Difficulty understanding visual images or special relationships	Changes in vision due to cataracts or macular degeneration is normal	Having difficulty judging distance or perception (i.e. walking past a mirror and not realizing your own image is in it, but thinking someone else is in the room)
New problems with speaking or writing	Sometimes having trouble finding the right word	Unable to follow or join a conversation; may struggle with vocabulary and call a common object like a watch a hand-clock
Misplacing things and being unable to retrace steps to find them	Misplace eyeglasses or remote for TV on occasion	Put things away in unusual places like putting eyeglasses in the refrigerator. May frequently misplace things or accuse others of stealing.
Using poor judgment	Making a bad decision once in awhile	Giving large amounts of money away to telemarketers; paying less attention to grooming or personal hygiene
Withdrawal from work or social activities	Occasionally feeling weary of work or having to attend social events	Unable to remember how to perform a favorite hobby; avoiding social situations
Changes in mood and personality	Becoming irritable when a certain routine is disrupted	Becoming confused, suspicious, depressed, fearful or anxious; getting easily upset at home or in places where you are out of your comfort zone

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