

Alzheimer's Disease

Alzheimer's disease is a disorder in which there is a progressive decaying of brain tissue. It is characterised by a decline in mental and emotional capabilities.

What to look for...

- Mood changes: [depression](#), paranoia, agitation, [anxiety](#), selfishness, childish behavior.
- Disorientation, confusion, inattention, loss of memory for recent events, inability to retain new information.
- Tendency to misplace things.
- Dizziness.

What to look for...

Memory, comprehension, and speech deteriorate in a person affected by this disease. The person's world begins to change as they cannot function as they once had – simple arithmetic skills are impossible and they find it hard to keep their attention on one thing for too long.

Dramatic mood swings occur ending up with the person becoming confused. Alzheimer's patients often become lost and may quite frequently wander off causing havoc for their families. Eventually, the person may become totally introverted, not able to communicate, helpless, and incontinent. The disease is usually fatal.

Once diagnosed with the disease, the person usually lives about 7 years. However the person may continue to function for longer.

Causes

Many people develop Alzheimer's as they grow older, however the disease is not a normal process of growing old.

The gradual loss of brain function that characterises Alzheimer's disease seems to be due to two main forms of neural damage: Nerve fibres grow tangled, and protein deposits known as plaques build up in the affected tissue. Researchers are not yet sure why or how this occurs.

Another theory suggests that aluminium from cookware, for example may lead to Alzheimer's. But this has not been proven.

Too much [zinc](#) in the diet has also been sited as a possible factor but this is also debateable.

In a minority of cases, trauma may be a contributing factor. About 15 percent of Alzheimer's sufferers have a history of head injury.

Traditional Treatment

Unfortunately Alzheimer's disease is incurable. There are medications that can slow the onset of the disease, however.

Caring for an Alzheimer's patient is often very stressful for family members. Eventually, full-time nursing care will be necessary.

Alternative/Natural Treatments

The treatment of Alzheimer's with alternative remedies may help slow the progress of the disease or help with the symptoms.

- *Chelation Therapy* – a non surgical way of removing the traces of accumulated metals such as aluminium in the body. This may have side effects so it is important to seek medical advice before attempting this. – a non surgical way of removing the traces of accumulated metals such as aluminium in the body. This may have side effects so it is important to seek medical advice before attempting this.
- *Herbal Therapies* – [Ginkgo Biloba](#) extract is said to alleviate early symptoms of Alzheimer's. Also taking a good antioxidant vitamin supplement may help in the early stages of the disease. – [Ginkgo Biloba](#) extract is said to alleviate early symptoms of Alzheimer's. Also taking a good antioxidant vitamin supplement may help in the early stages of the disease.
- *Vitamins* – [A](#), [B](#), [C](#) and [E](#) are helpful.
- *Dietary considerations* – avoid eating deep fried foods and other foods with unsaturated fats such as fast food and butter. Try to eat more fish and fruit, vegetables and steamed white meat. Avoid salt, sugar, alcohol and caffeine. Drink plenty of filtered water daily. – avoid eating deep fried foods and other foods with unsaturated fats such as fast food and butter. Try to eat more fish and fruit, vegetables and steamed white meat. Avoid salt, sugar, alcohol and caffeine. Drink plenty of filtered water daily.
- *Homoeopathy* – Seek Professional advice for remedies that may help in treating unusual or disruptive behaviour. – Seek Professional advice for remedies that may help in treating unusual or disruptive behaviour.

Personal Care

- Maintain a stable and familiar household
- Have the patient wear an ID bracelet with a phone number on it.
- Talk to the Alzheimer's patient about memories or positive events that happened long ago. It will be something they can remember and recall.
- See Organizations or professional associations that may help you and the patient cope.

Although some studies suggest a link between Alzheimer's and zinc, doctors do not recommend that you attempt to limit your daily intake. Talk to your doctor in depth about this.

When to seek further professional advice

- Someone in your family is displaying signs of this disease.