



From the SPAMEC Health Concerns Committee

Alzheimer's is a progressive, deadly brain disease for which there is no cure, and is not a normal part of healthy aging. Memory problems are typically one of the first warning signs of Alzheimer's and related dementias. Researchers are still working to discover the root cause, but it's widely believed to be due to the buildup of misfolded proteins between nerve cells, which causes brain damage. This damage begins a decade or more before symptoms start to show. It's important to monitor yourself and loved ones for any signs of mild cognitive impairment (MCI), **which can precede** Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia.

Symptoms Of Alzheimer's Disease:

- Memory loss
- Poor judgment leading to bad decisions
- Loss of spontaneity and sense of initiative
- Taking longer to complete normal daily tasks
- Repeating questions
- Trouble handling money and paying bills
- Wandering and getting lost
- Losing things or misplacing them in odd places
- Mood and personality changes
- Increased anxiety and/or aggression
- Difficulty with language

Signs Of MCI (Mild Cognitive Impairment):

- Losing things often
- Forgetting to go to events or appointments
- Having more trouble coming up with words than other people of the same age

A Few Quick Stats:

- There are over 6 million Americans living with Alzheimer's with 3 million new cases diagnosed each year.
- The number of people living with the disease doubles every 5 years beyond age 65.
- Alzheimer's is deadlier than breast cancer and prostate cancer combined.
- The ***disease is most prevalent in women and Black Americans.***
- Younger people may get Alzheimer's disease, but it is less common.
- Symptoms of the disease can first appear after age 60, and the risk increases with age.

What To Do If You Suspect Alzheimer's Disease

Getting checked by your healthcare provider can help determine if the symptoms you are experiencing are related to Alzheimer's disease, or a more treatable condition such as a vitamin deficiency or a side effect from medication. Early and accurate diagnosis also provides opportunities for you and your family to consider financial planning, develop advance directives, enroll in clinical trials, and anticipate care needs.

Currently, many people living with Alzheimer's are cared for at home by family members. Although most people willingly provide care to their loved ones and friends, caring for a person with Alzheimer's at home can be a difficult task and may become overwhelming at times. Each day brings new challenges as the caregiver copes with changing levels of ability and new patterns of behavior. As the disease gets worse, people with Alzheimer's often need more intensive care.

Healthy Behaviors for A Healthier Brain and Healthy Body:

- Move More -- Get Adequate Physical Activity
- Eat Healthy -- Follow A Nutritious Diet
- Quit Smoking
- Prevent and Manage High Blood Pressure
- Prevent and Manage High Cholesterol
- Maintain a Healthy Weight
- Get Enough Sleep
- Stay Engaged -- Connect With Others
- Manage Blood Sugar
- If You Drink, Do So in Moderation