



Imperial County Public Administrator/Area Agency on Aging

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Public Administrator/Guardian/Conservator
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Department Description

The Public Administrator is an appointed position by the Board of Supervisors (Gov. Code Section 24011). The Public Administrator directs, manages, and reviews the operation of various programs including:

- Public Administrator
- Public Guardian
- Public Conservator (not LPS Conservatorships)
- Representative Payee Program
- Targeted Case Management Program
- Indigent Burial
- Area Agency on Aging
- Dementia Care Program

Mission Statement

Protecting, assisting and advocating for individuals by coordinating community-based services to maintain their independence at home; and protecting the assets and managing the estates of those who have passed away.

Dementia Care Program



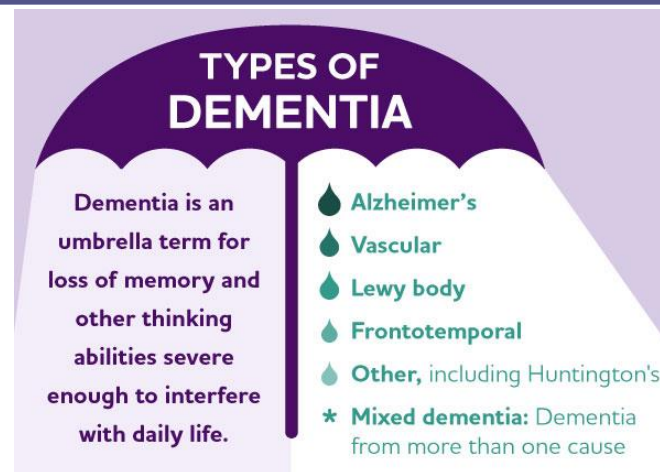
Dementia - What is it?

Dementia is not a single disease. It's an overall term to describe a collection of symptoms that one may experience if they are living with a variety of diseases, including Alzheimer's disease.

Diseases grouped under the general term "dementia" are caused by abnormal brain changes.

Dementia symptoms trigger a decline in thinking skills, also known as cognitive abilities, severe enough to impair daily life and independent function. They also affect behavior, feelings and relationships

Dementia is often incorrectly referred to as "senility" or "senile dementia," which reflects the formerly widespread but incorrect belief that serious mental decline is a normal part of aging.



Alzheimer's Disease - What is it?



Alzheimer's is a degenerative brain disease that is caused by complex brain changes following cell damage. It leads to dementia symptoms that gradually worsen over time. The most common early sign of Alzheimer's Disease is trouble remembering new information because the disease typically impacts the part of the brain associated with learning first.



As Alzheimer's advances, symptoms get more severe and include disorientation, confusion and behavior changes. Eventually, speaking, swallowing and walking become difficult.

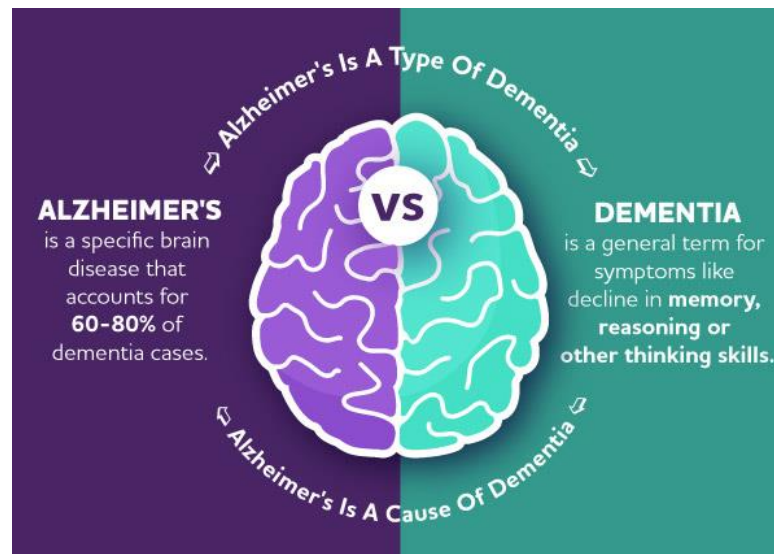


Though the greatest known risk factor for Alzheimer's is increasing age, the disease is not a normal part of aging. And though most people with Alzheimer's are 65 and older, approximately 200,000 Americans under 65 are living with younger-onset Alzheimer's disease.



Dementia V. Alzheimer's Disease: What is the Difference?

- The terms “dementia” and “Alzheimer’s disease” can be confusing. Many people believe they are synonymous, but the two words mean different things.
- Dementia is a general term for a decline in mental ability severe enough to interfere with daily life. Alzheimer’s is the most common cause of dementia. Alzheimer’s is a specific disease. Dementia is not.
- Learning about the two terms and the difference between them is important and can empower individuals with Alzheimer’s or another dementia, their families and their caregivers with necessary knowledge.



10 Early Signs and Symptoms

1

Memory Loss that Disrupts Daily Life

One of the most common signs of Alzheimer's disease, especially in the early stage, is forgetting recently learned information. Others include forgetting important dates or events, asking the same questions over and over, and increasingly needing to rely on memory aids (e.g., reminder notes or electronic devices) or family members for things they used to handle on their own.

What's a typical age-related change?

Sometimes forgetting names or appointments, but remembering them later.

10 Early Signs and Symptoms

2

Challenges in Planning or Solving Problems

Some people living with changes in their memory due to Alzheimer's or other dementia may experience changes in their ability to develop and follow a plan or work with numbers. They may have trouble following a familiar recipe or keeping track of monthly bills. They may have difficulty concentrating and take much longer to do things than they did before.

What's a typical age-related change?

Making occasional errors when managing finances or household bills.

10 Early Signs and Symptoms

3

Difficulty Completing Familiar Tasks

People living with memory changes from Alzheimer's or other dementia often find it hard to complete daily tasks. Sometimes they may have trouble driving to a familiar location, organizing a grocery list or remembering the rules of a favorite game.

What's a typical age-related change?

Occasionally needing help to use microwave settings or to record a TV show.

10 Early Signs and Symptoms

4

Confusion with Time or Place

People living with Alzheimer's or other dementia can lose track of dates, seasons and the passage of time. They may have trouble understanding something if it is not happening immediately. Sometimes they may forget where they are or how they got there.

What's a typical age-related change?

Getting confused about the day of the week but figuring it out later.

10 Early Signs and Symptoms

5

Trouble Understanding Visual Images and Spatial Relationships

Some people living with Alzheimer's or other dementia could experience vision changes. This may lead to difficulty with balance or trouble reading. They may also have problems judging distance and determining color or contrast, causing issues with driving.

What's a typical age-related change?

Vision changes related to cataracts.

10 Early Signs and Symptoms

6

New Problems with Words in Speaking or Writing

People living with Alzheimer's or other dementia may have trouble following or joining a conversation. They may stop in the middle of a conversation and have no idea how to continue or they may repeat themselves. They may struggle with vocabulary, have trouble naming a familiar object or use the wrong name (e.g., calling a "watch" a "hand-clock").

What's a typical age-related change?

Sometimes having trouble finding the right word.

10 Early Signs and Symptoms

7

Misplacing Things and Losing the Ability to Retrace Steps

A person living with Alzheimer's or other dementia may put things in unusual places. They may lose things and be unable to go back over their steps to find them again. He or she may accuse others of stealing, especially as the disease progresses.

What's a typical age-related change?

Misplacing things from time to time and retracing steps to find them.

10 Early Signs and Symptoms

8

Decreased or Poor Judgment

Individuals living with Alzheimer's or other dementia may experience changes in judgment or decision-making. For example, they may use poor judgment when dealing with money or pay less attention to grooming or keeping themselves clean.

What's a typical age-related change?

Making a bad decision or mistake once in a while, like neglecting to change the oil in the car.

10 Early Signs and Symptoms

9

Withdrawal from Work or Social Activities

A person living with Alzheimer's or other dementia may experience changes in the ability to hold or follow a conversation. As a result, they may withdraw from hobbies, social activities or other engagements. They may have trouble keeping up with a favorite team or activity.

What's a typical age-related change?

Sometimes feeling uninterested in family or social obligations.

10 Early Signs and Symptoms

10

Changes in Mood and Personality

Individuals living with Alzheimer's or other dementia may experience mood and personality changes. They can become confused, suspicious, depressed, fearful or anxious. They may be easily upset at home, with friends or when out of their comfort zone.

What's a typical age-related change?

Developing very specific ways of doing things and becoming irritable when a routine is disrupted.

Stages of Alzheimer's

Alzheimer's disease typically progresses slowly in three general stages — mild (early stage), moderate (middle stage), and severe (late stage). Since Alzheimer's affects people in different ways, the timing and severity of dementia symptoms varies as each person progresses through the stages of Alzheimer's differently.

Overview of disease progression

The symptoms of Alzheimer's disease worsen over time, although the rate at which the disease progresses varies. On average, a person with Alzheimer's lives four to eight years after diagnosis, but can live as long as 20 years, depending on other factors. It may be difficult to place a person with Alzheimer's in a specific stage as stages may overlap.

Stages of Alzheimer's

Mild Alzheimer's disease (early stage)

In the early stage of Alzheimer's, a person may function independently. He or she may still drive, work and be part of social activities. Despite this, the person may feel as if he or she is having memory lapses, such as forgetting familiar words or the location of everyday objects.

Friends, family or others close to the individual begin to notice difficulties. During a detailed medical interview, doctors may be able to detect problems in memory or concentration. Common difficulties include:

- Problems coming up with the right word or name
- Trouble remembering names when introduced to new people
- Challenges performing tasks in social or work settings.
- Forgetting material that one has just read
- Losing or misplacing a valuable object
- Increasing trouble with planning or organizing

Although the onset of Alzheimer's disease cannot yet be stopped or reversed, an early diagnosis can allow a person the opportunity to live well with the disease for as long as possible and plan for the future.

Stages of Alzheimer's

Moderate Alzheimer's disease (middle stage)

Moderate Alzheimer's is typically the longest stage and can last for many years. As the disease progresses, the person with Alzheimer's will require a greater level of care.

During the moderate stage of Alzheimer's, the dementia symptoms are more pronounced. A person may have greater difficulty performing tasks, such as paying bills, but they may still remember significant details about their life.

You may notice the person with Alzheimer's confusing words, getting frustrated or angry, or acting in unexpected ways, such as refusing to bathe. Damage to nerve cells in the brain can make it difficult to express thoughts and perform routine tasks.

At this point, symptoms will be noticeable to others and may include:

- Forgetfulness of events or about one's own personal history
- Feeling moody or withdrawn, especially in socially or mentally challenging situations
- Being unable to recall their own address or telephone number or the high school or college from which they graduated
- Confusion about where they are or what day it is
- The need for help choosing proper clothing for the season or the occasion
- Trouble controlling bladder and bowels in some individuals
- Changes in sleep patterns, such as sleeping during the day and becoming restless at night
- An increased risk of wandering and becoming lost

Personality and behavioral changes, including suspiciousness and delusions or compulsive, repetitive behavior like hand-wringing or tissue shredding

Stages of Alzheimer's

Severe Alzheimer's disease (late stage)

In the final stage of this disease, dementia symptoms are severe. Individuals lose the ability to respond to their environment, to carry on a conversation and, eventually, to control movement. They may still say words or phrases, but communicating pain becomes difficult. As memory and cognitive skills continue to worsen, significant personality changes may take place and individuals need extensive help with daily activities.

At this stage, individuals may:

- Need round-the-clock assistance with daily activities and personal care
- Lose awareness of recent experiences as well as of their surroundings
- Experience changes in physical abilities, including the ability to walk, sit and, eventually, swallow
- Have increasing difficulty communicating
- Become vulnerable to infections, especially pneumonia



A Positive Physical Approach for Someone with Dementia

1. **Knock** on door or table - to get attention - signal your approach
2. **Stop moving** at the boundary between public & personal space – **6 ft out** - get permission to enter or approach
3. **Open hand motion near face and smile** – look friendly and give the person a visual cue – make eye contact – open hand near face – cues eyes to look there
4. Call the person by preferred **name** OR at least say “**Hi!**” – avoid endearments
5. Move your hand out from near your face to a greeting **handshake** position – make sure they notice you hand out to shake – then stand tall and move forward SLOWLY
6. Approach the person from the **front** – come in within 45 degrees of center - visual
7. **Move slowly** – one step/second, stand tall, don't crouch down or lean in as you move toward the person



A Positive Physical Approach for Someone with Dementia

8. Move toward the right **side of the person** and offer your hand - give the person time to look at your hand and reach for it, if s/he is doing something else – offer, don't force
9. Stand to the side of the person at arm's length – respect intimate space & be supportive not confrontational – but don't go too far back' – stay to the front - visual
10. **Shake hands** with the person – make eye contact while shaking
11. Slide your hand from a 'shake' position to **hand-under-hand** position – for safety, connection, and function
12. Give your name & greet – “I'm (name). It's good to see you!”
13. **Get to the person's level** to talk – sit, squat, or kneel if the person is seated and stand beside the person if s/he is standing
14. NOW, deliver your message...



A Positive Physical Approach for Someone with Dementia

Approaching When the Person is DISTRESSED! -Some CHANGES –

1. *Look concerned* not too happy, if the person is upset
2. *Let the person move toward you, keeping your body turned to the side* (supportive – not confrontational) –
3. *If the person is seated & you DON'T get permission to enter personal space – turn sideways & kneel at 6' out – offer greeting & handshake again – look for an OK to come into their personal space – it will usually come at this time* (submissive posture)
4. After greeting... try one of *two* options...
 - a. “Sounds like you are (give an emotion or feeling that seems to be true)???”
 - b. Repeat the person’s words to you... If s/he said, “Where’s my mom?” you would say “You’re looking for your mom (pause)... tell me about your mom...” If the person said “I want to go home!”, you would say “You want to go home (pause)... Tell me about your home...”.



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A Positive Physical Approach for Someone with Dementia

VIDEOS

<https://teepasnow.com/about-dementia/#pacskills>

Questions or Comments?

Thank you for your time!

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