



Understanding Alzheimer's Disease

Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia, accounting for 60-80% of all cases.

1. Introduction

Alzheimer's is a degenerative brain disease that affects memory, behavior and cognitive abilities. Symptoms worsen over time and eventually grow severe enough to interfere with daily life. While there is currently no cure for Alzheimer's, scientific advancements and ongoing research are helping to create understanding of the disease and its treatment options.

2. Stages

Alzheimer's disease advances gradually through three stages. Each person is affected differently, so symptoms and progression can vary.

Early-stage Alzheimer's

- + Person often functions independently
- + Memory lapses and cognitive impairments begin
- + Diagnoses most often occur

Middle-stage Alzheimer's

- + Increase in symptoms
- + Person needs help with some daily activities
- + Significant personality and behavioral changes

Late-stage Alzheimer's

- + Basic communication becomes difficult
- + Person needs care 24/7
- + Loss of awareness and physical abilities

3. Risk Factors

The exact causes of Alzheimer's aren't fully understood, but various factors may increase a person's chance of developing the disease. Some risk factors include:

- + Advanced age
- + Family history & genetics
- + Gender – women are more likely to have Alzheimer's
- + Poor cardiovascular health
- + Heavy alcohol use
- + Poor sleep quality
- + Previous head injuries or TBI

4. Treatments

Despite not having a cure, there are treatment options that can impact the progression of the disease and improve the quality of life for patients and their families. Medications are available to lessen symptoms and slow the progression of the disease. Current research shows many treatments are most effective in the early stages of Alzheimer's, so early diagnosis is critical.

Did you know?

55 million people are living with Alzheimer's and other dementias around the world.

For more information on Alzheimer's Disease and supportive resources, please visit [alz.org](https://www.alz.org).

References:

<https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia>

<https://www.cdc.gov/alzheimers-dementia/about/index.html>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/alzheimers-disease/symptoms-causes/syc-20350447>

<https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/stages>

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