

June is Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month

***Women are at the epicenter of the Alzheimer's crisis. Almost two-thirds of American seniors living with Alzheimer's disease are women.**

***Not only are women more likely to have Alzheimer's, they are also more likely to be caregivers of those with Alzheimer's.**

[\(Alzheimer's Association\)](#)

Out of five million seniors aged 65 and older living with Alzheimer's disease, 3.2 million are women. Furthermore, at age 65, women have over a one in six chance of developing Alzheimer's over the remainder of their lives, compared to the one in 11 chance for men of the same demographic.

Alzheimer's disease is a type of dementia that causes problems with memory, thinking, and behavior; the side effects often develop slowly over time. Side effects usually include the regression of the patient's memory skills and other cognitive abilities to the point that they interfere with daily life. Despite being the most common form of dementia, there is no current cure for Alzheimer's. Treatments for symptoms are available, however.

What are the warning signs of Alzheimer's disease?

- **Memory loss that disrupts daily life.** This is one of the most common signs of Alzheimer's, especially if one is forgetting recently learned information.
- **Challenges in planning or solving problems.** Some may have trouble developing and following a plan. They may have trouble concentrating and take much longer to do things than before.
- **Difficulty completing familiar tasks.** Some people may have trouble completing daily tasks they should be accustomed to doing, such as driving to a familiar place.
- **Confusion with time or place.** Those with Alzheimer's may lose track of dates and the passage of time, struggle with understanding things that will happen in the future, or forget where they are and how they arrived there.

- **Trouble understanding visual images or spatial relationships.** Some may have difficulty with reading, judging distances, or determining color contrast if these symptoms are not connected with the regression of eyesight due to medical reasons, such as the growth of cataracts.
- **New problems with words in speaking or writing.** Those with Alzheimer's may have trouble joining, following, or continuing a conversation. Additionally, they may struggle with vocabulary and repeat themselves.
- **Misplacing items or losing the ability to retrace steps.** People with Alzheimer's may put items in the wrong or unusual place, often losing things and being unable to find them. They may also accuse others of stealing from them.
- **Decreased or poor judgment.** Some may use poor judgment with money and may pay less attention to their personal hygiene.
- **Withdrawal from work or social activities.** Due to loss of cognitive skills, Alzheimer's patients may withdraw from hobbies or social activities because of their inability to remember how to complete tasks relevant to those activities.
- **Changes in mood or personality.** Often, patients may become confused, suspicious, fearful, or anxious; they may become easily irritable and upset in places or situations where they are out of their comfort zone.

(Adapted from the [Alzheimer's Association](#))

If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's or a related dementia, *you are not* alone; call the Alzheimer's Association's 24/7 helpline at 800-272-3900 or use their [Alzheimer's Navigator](#) to connect with local support services or conduct further research.

For more information: [Alzheimer's Disease Fact Sheet](#)

For more information on other women's health issues, please visit the Maryland Commission for [Women's Online Health Information and Resource Directory](#).