

is it alzheimer's or just signs of aging?

Warning signs you should know



KNOW^{the} 10 SIGNS

EARLY DETECTION MATTERS

Your memory often changes as you grow older. But memory loss that disrupts daily life is not a typical part of aging. It may be a symptom of dementia. Dementia is a slow decline in memory, thinking and reasoning skills. The most common form of dementia is Alzheimer’s (AHLZ-high-merz) disease, a fatal disorder that results in the loss of brain cells and function.

Because African-Americans are more likely to have vascular disease (problems with blood circulation), they may also be at greater risk for developing Alzheimer’s. Risk factors for vascular disease — like diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol — may also be risk factors for Alzheimer’s and stroke-related dementia.

What’s the difference?

Signs of Alzheimer’s/dementia	Typical age-related changes
Poor judgment and decision making	Making a bad decision once in a while
Inability to manage a budget	Missing a monthly payment
Losing track of the date or the season	Forgetting which day it is and remembering later
Difficulty having a conversation	Sometimes forgetting which word to use
Misplacing things and being unable to retrace steps to find them	Losing things from time to time

10 warning signs of alzheimer's disease

1

Memory loss that disrupts daily life

2

Challenges in planning or solving problems

3

Difficulty completing familiar tasks

4

Confusion with time or place

5

Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships

6

New problems with words in speaking or writing

7

Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps

8

Decreased or poor judgment

9

Withdrawal from work or social activities

10

Changes in mood and personality

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EARLY DETECTION MATTERS

It may be hard to know the difference between age-related changes and the first signs of Alzheimer's disease. Some people may recognize changes in themselves before anyone else notices. Other times, friends and family will be the first to observe changes in memory, behavior or abilities.

To help identify problems early, the Alzheimer's Association has created a list of warning signs for Alzheimer's and other dementias. Individuals may experience one or more of these in different degrees.

1

Memory loss that disrupts daily life

One of the most common signs of Alzheimer's, especially in the early stages, is forgetting recently learned information. Others include forgetting important dates or events; asking for the same information 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.

2

Challenges in planning or solving problems.

Some people 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 balancing a checkbook.

3

Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work or at leisure

People with Alzheimer's often find it hard to complete daily tasks. Sometimes, people may have trouble driving to a familiar location, managing a budget at work or remembering the rules of a favorite game.

What's a typical age-related change?

Occasionally needing help to use the settings on a microwave or to record a television show.

4

Confusion with time or place

People with Alzheimer's 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.

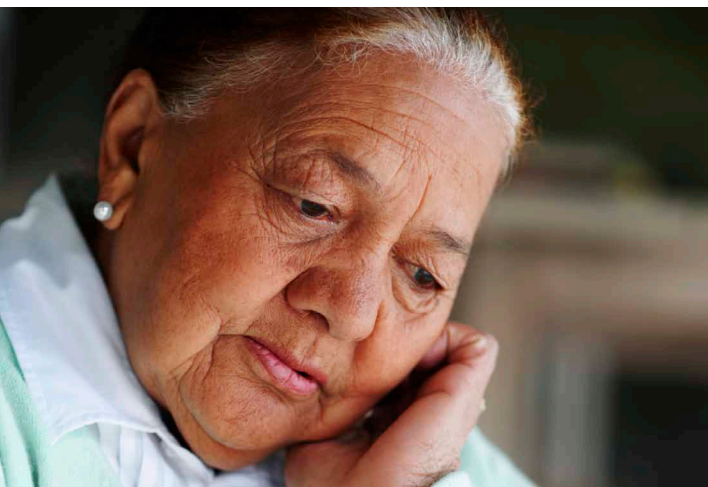
5

Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships

For some people, having vision problems is a sign of Alzheimer's. They may have difficulty reading, judging distance and determining color or contrast, which may cause problems with driving.

What's a typical age-related change?

Vision changes related to cataracts.





6

New problems with words in speaking or writing

People with Alzheimer's 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 problems finding the right word or call things by 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.

7

Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps

A person with Alzheimer's disease may put things in unusual places. They may lose things and be unable to go back over their steps to find them again. Sometimes, they may accuse others of stealing. This may occur more frequently over time.

What's a typical age-related change?

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

8

Decreased or poor judgment

People with Alzheimer's may experience changes in judgment or decision making. For example, they may use poor judgment when dealing with money, giving large amounts to telemarketers. They may pay less attention to grooming or keeping themselves clean.

What's a typical age-related change?

Making a bad decision once in a while.

9

Withdrawal from work or social activities

A person with Alzheimer's may start to remove themselves from hobbies, social activities, work projects or sports. They may have trouble keeping up with a favorite sports team or remembering how to complete a favorite hobby. They may also avoid being social because of the changes they have experienced.

What's a typical age-related change?

Sometimes feeling weary of work, family and social obligations.

10

Changes in mood and personality

The mood and personalities of people with Alzheimer's can change. They can become confused, suspicious, depressed, fearful or anxious. They may be easily upset at home, at work, with friends or in places where they are 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.

Note: Mood changes with age may also be a sign of some other condition. Consult a doctor if you observe any changes.

If you or someone you care about is experiencing any of the 10 warning signs, please see a doctor to find the cause. Early diagnosis gives you a chance to seek treatment and plan for your future. The Alzheimer's Association can help.

Visit: **alz.org/10signs**

Call: **800.272.3900**

Learn more: **alz.org/elearning**



alz.org/10signs

Learn more about the 10 warning signs of Alzheimer's.



alz.org/care

The Alzheimer's and Dementia Caregiver Center provides information and resources, including:

- Alzheimer's Navigator® — Assess your needs and create customized action plans.
- Community Resource Finder — Find local resources.
- ALZConnected® — Connect with others affected by the disease who can relate to your situation.



alz.org/elearning

Free online workshop:

Know the 10 Signs: Early Detection Matters



800.272.3900

24/7 Helpline — available all day, every day.

alzheimer's association®

The Alzheimer's Association is the world's leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health.

Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's®.

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