

ALZHEIMER'S?

"suffering is always hard to quantify - especially when the pain is caused by a cruel disease as Alzheimer's. Most illnesses attack the body; Alzheimer's destroys the mind - and in the process, annihilates the very self." ~
Jeff Kluger

Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia. Dementia is a collective name for conditions in which progressive degeneration of the brain affects memory, thinking, behaviour and emotion. While the risk of developing dementia increases dramatically with age, most older people do not develop the condition. Although it is true that most people with the disease are 65 and older, people younger than 65 can also have early-onset Alzheimer's disease. It is not an inevitable consequence of getting older. Just one in five people in their eighties, for example, are affected by it. Symptoms may include:

- loss of memory
- difficulty in finding the right words or understanding what people are saying
- difficulty in performing previously routine tasks
- personality and mood changes

If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease, you're probably pretty familiar with the mental challenges posed by the disease. It can make even the simplest and most frequent tasks difficult and cause the sufferer to lose their ability to even recognize faces of their loved ones. But in addition to the observable and commonly known facts about this progressive disease, there are some things you may not know.

Chronic Sleep Deprivation Could Contribute
A study found that a buildup of the protein beta-amyloid may attack brain cells and trigger Alzheimer's. This protein is common in those who don't get enough sleep on a regular basis. So prioritizing sleep may be even more important than we already knew!

Music Can Help

Music has been shown to boost brain activity, and has been shown to be an effective therapy for Alzheimer's patients. Music has been shown to connect us to our emotions well, which can lead to unlocking memories and improved cognitive ability over time.

A study in 2013 found that musical aptitude and musical appreciation are two of the longest lasting abilities for Alzheimer's sufferers.

Alzheimer's Is a Leading Cause of Death

In fact, it comes in sixth behind heart disease, cancer, respiratory disease, accidents and stroke. The CDC reported over 93,500 deaths from Alzheimer's in 2014 alone. And the condition is widespread: According to the Alzheimer's Association, 1 in every 3 seniors will die with this disease or another form of dementia.



Women Are Far More Susceptible than Men

In fact, about two of every three Alzheimer's patients in the U.S. are female. Traditionally, it's been thought this may be due to women tending to live longer than men. The risk of developing this or another form of dementia grow exponentially with age. Researchers are beginning to question this conclusion, however, as more genetic and hormonal influences come to light.

Alcoholics Are at High Risk

Alcohol-related brain damage (or ARBD) is a disorder caused by overconsumption of alcohol over a long period of time. This excessive consumption can lead to many forms of dementia, including Alzheimer's.

A small patient-based study of mixed-race persons over the age of 65 years [11] reported 8.6% of patients with possible dementia. The recent World Alzheimer's Report [1] estimated that there were 4.4 million people over the age of 60 years living in South Africa, with approximately 187,000 living with dementia. This number is predicted to rise to 250,000 by 2030, with a concurrent increase in the number of older people (60 years plus) to 7 million. This can take a huge toll on caregivers. If you're caring for someone in the grip of dementia, know that you are not alone. There are resources and support available to help.

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21 SEPTEMBER 2023
World
Alzheimer's
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