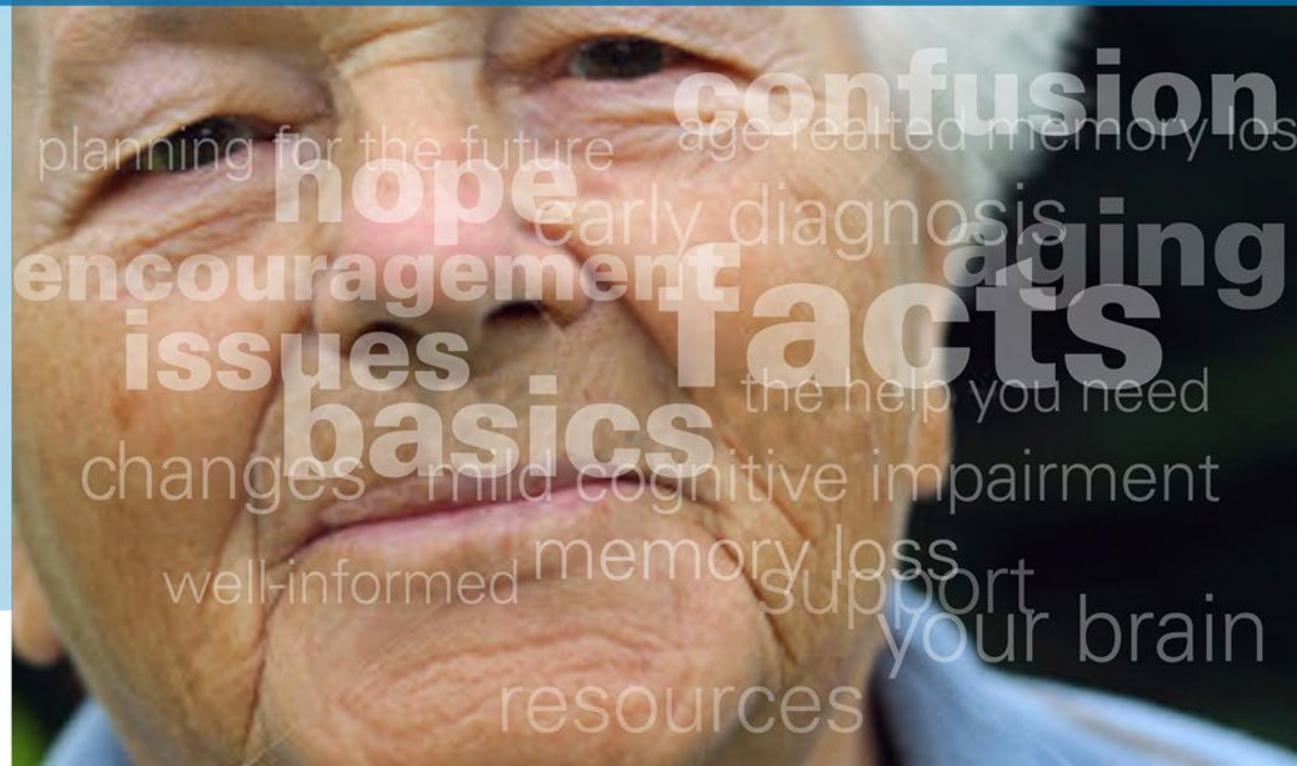


the basics

memory loss, dementia
and alzheimer's disease



Typical changes

- Typical age-related changes involve:
 - Making a bad decision once in a while
 - Missing an occasional monthly payment
 - Forgetting which day it is and remembering later
 - Sometimes forgetting which word to use
 - Losing things from time to time

Problematic changes

1. Memory changes that disrupt daily life
2. Challenges in planning or solving problems
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks
4. Confusion with time or place
5. Trouble with 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

What is dementia?

- Loss of cognitive functioning serious enough to interfere with daily functioning
- Causes changes in:
 - Memory
 - Language
 - Thought
 - Navigation
 - Behavior
 - Personality/Mood
 - Planning and Organizing

Reversible diseases that mimic dementia

Emotional disorders

Metabolic disorders (e.g., hypothyroidism)

Brain tumors

Dehydration

Emotional disorders

Sensory loss

Vitamin deficiencies (e.g., B12 deficiency)

Infections

Alcohol, drugs, medication interactions

Dementia

Alzheimer's disease

Frontotemporal
lobar degeneration

Vascular dementia

Dementia with Lewy
bodies

Mixed dementia

More rare types of brain disorders



Other more rare dementias:

- Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease
- Parkinson's disease
- Huntington's disease
- Normal pressure hydrocephalus
- Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome

Visual processing disorders related to dementia:

- Posterior Cortical Atrophy
- Cortical Visual Impairment

Mild Cognitive Impairment

- Severe enough to show up on tests
- Not severe enough to affect daily life
- Increases risk of developing Alzheimer's disease



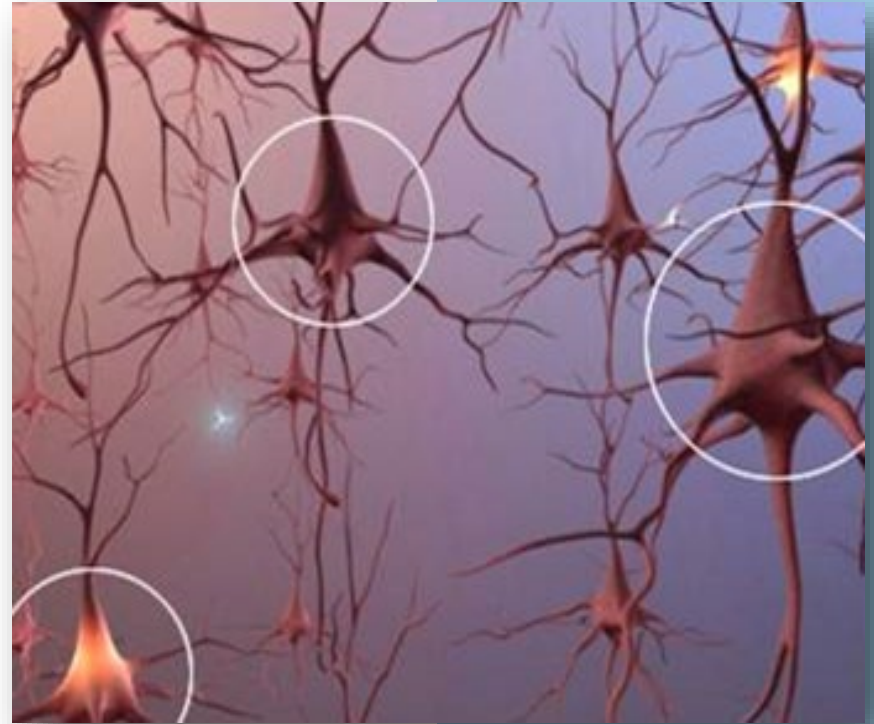
What is Alzheimer's disease?

Alzheimer's disease:

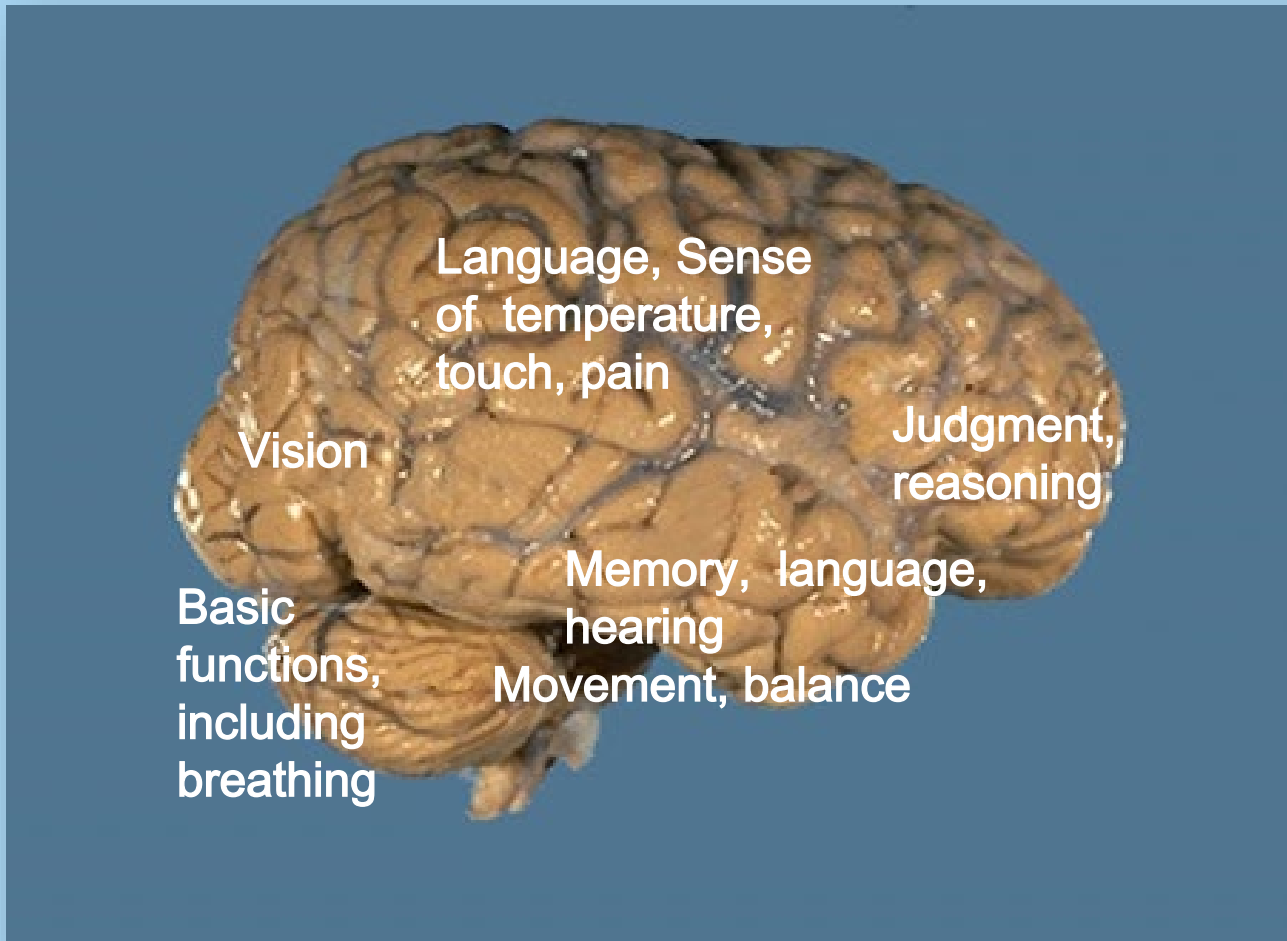
- is a brain disorder
- is a progressive disease
- is the most common form of dementia
- has no cure
- is eventually fatal
- affects over 5 million Americans

How the brain works

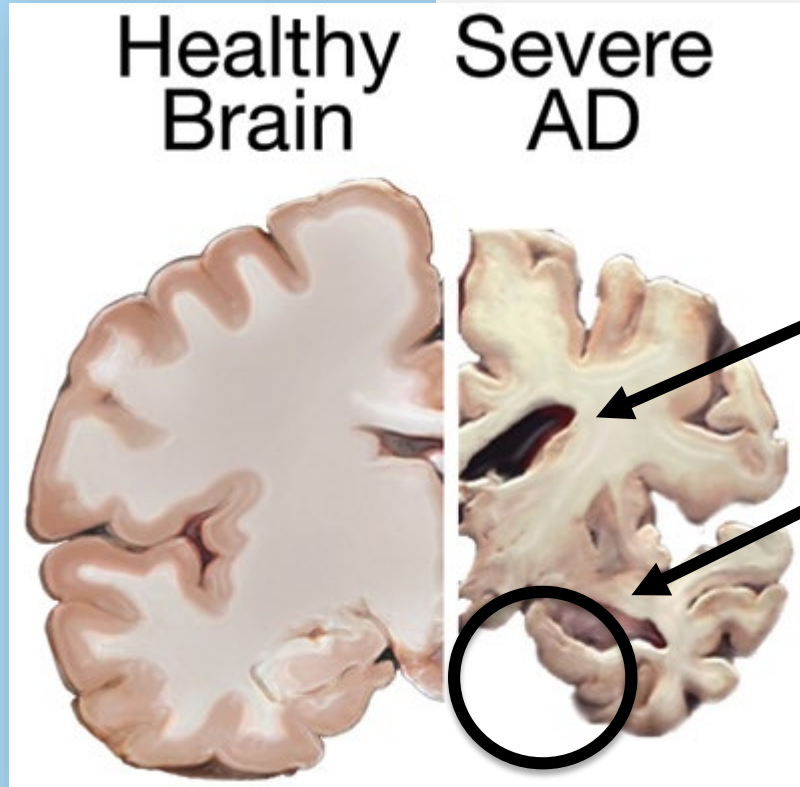
- There are 100 billion nerve cells, or neurons, creating a branching network.
- Signals traveling through the neuron forest form memories, thoughts and feelings
- Alzheimer's disease destroys neurons



Which functions are affected?



Healthy vs. Alzheimer's brain



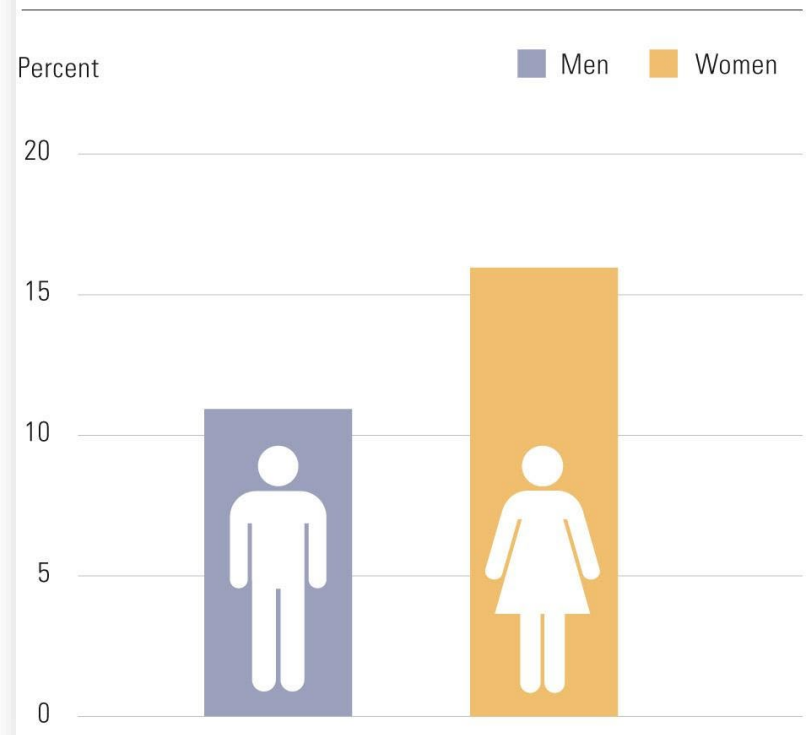
Ventricles enlarge

Cortex shrivels, especially near hippocampus

Major risk factors

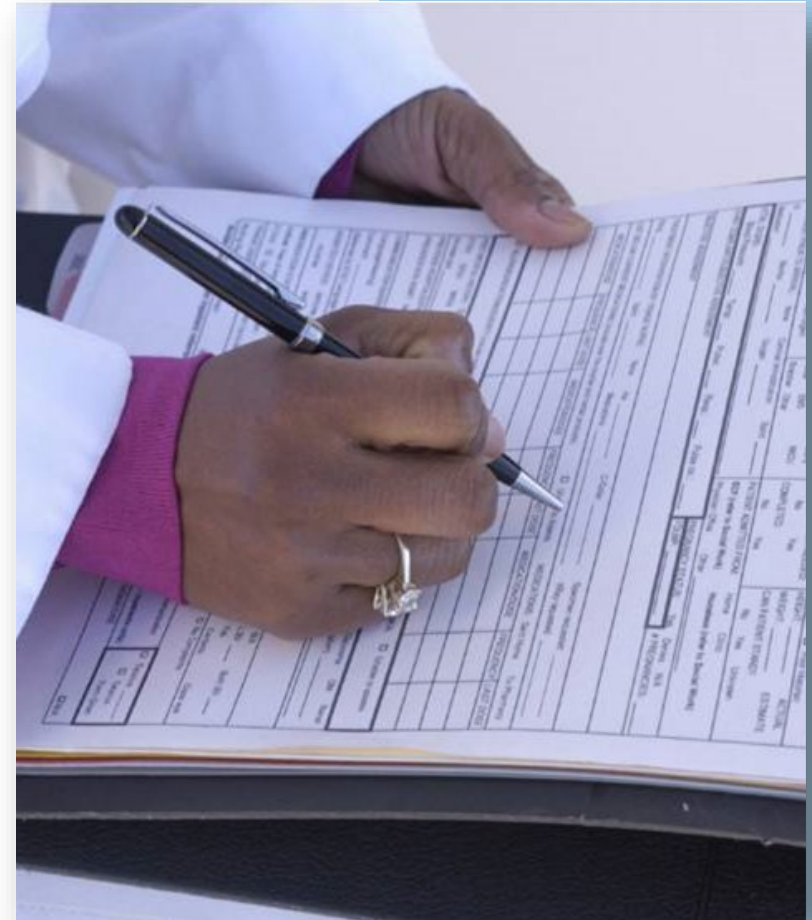
- The primary risk factor is age
- The incidence is higher in women largely due to women living longer
- Down syndrome is correlated with Alzheimer's
- Family history can increase risk
- There are two categories of genes

Estimated Percentage of Americans Aged 71+ with Dementia by Gender, ADAMS



Selecting a Doctor

- Doctors can diagnosis Alzheimer's disease with accuracy
- Start with:
 - A physician who is experienced with diagnosing Alzheimer's
- Then consult the following as needed:
 - Geriatrician
 - Neurologist
 - Psychiatrist
 - Neuropsychologist



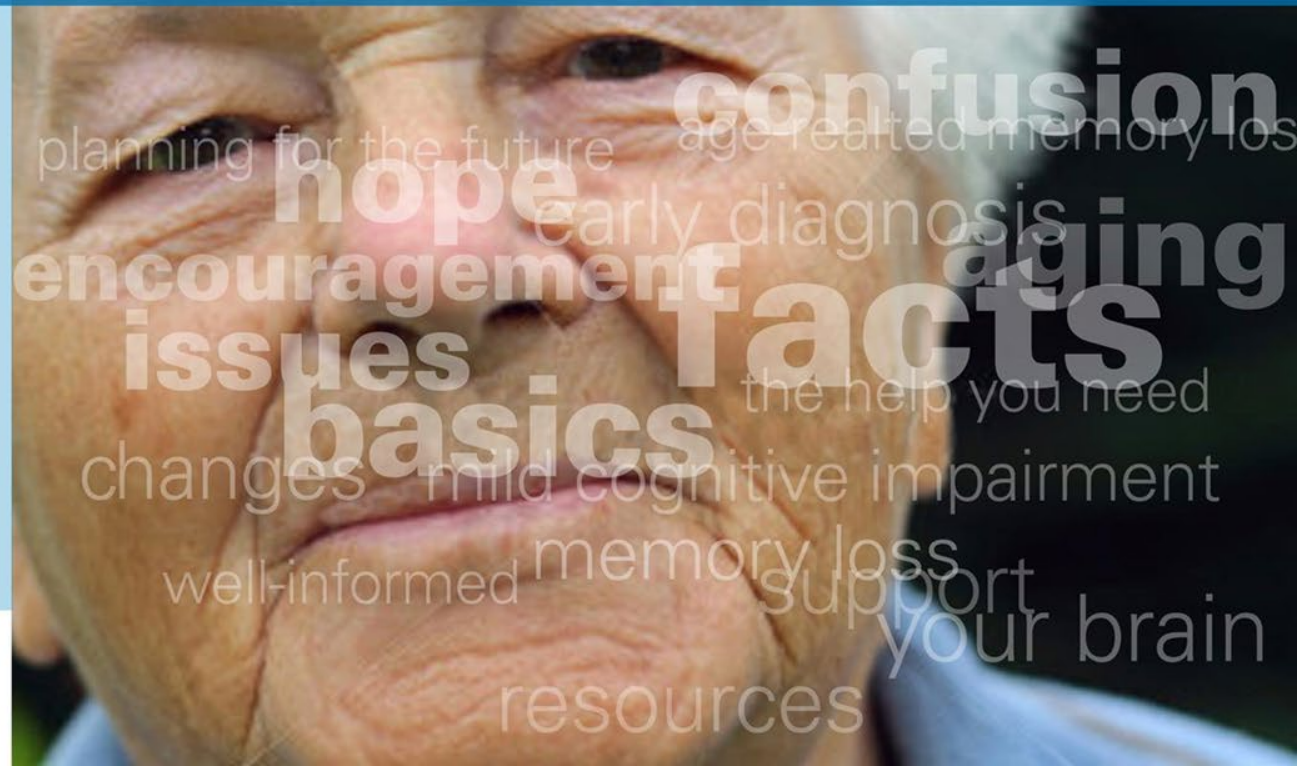
Preparing for the doctor's visit

- Keep a log
 - Write a list of symptoms, be specific
 - Include when, how often and where
 - Develop the list with input from other family members
- List current and previous health problems
- Bring all medication (prescriptions, vitamins, herbal supplements and over the counter medication)

Steps in the assessment

1. Medical history
2. Mental status evaluation
3. Series of evaluations that test memory, reasoning, visual-motor coordination and language skills
4. Physical examination, which includes:
 - Evaluating blood pressure, nutrition and pulse
 - Testing nervous system functions like sensation and balance
 - A brain scan to rule out a stroke
 - Lab tests to rule out other disorders
5. Psychiatric evaluation, to rule out emotional causes of symptoms
6. Interviews with family to get more information about changes

When the diagnosis is Alzheimer's disease...



Emotions run high

shock

fear

confusion

guilt

grief

worry

anger

acceptance

denial

relief



Stages of Alzheimer's disease

- Early Stage (Mild Alzheimer's)
 - Recent memory loss
 - Difficulty managing money, driving, or handling social situations
- Middle Stage (Moderate Alzheimer's)
 - Difficulty with language
 - Problems keeping track of personal items
 - May need help with grooming
- Late Stage (Severe Alzheimer's)
 - Long- and short-term memory affected
 - Needs care around the clock



Plan early

- Be an active partner in long-term care plan
- Develop a relationship with your healthcare team
- Get legal and financial issues in order
- Grow a support system
- Educate yourself about the disease

Medications to treat symptoms

- Cholinesterase inhibitors for mild to moderate symptoms
 - Donepezil (Aricept®)
 - Rivastigmine (Exelon®)
 - Galantamine (Razadyne®)
- NMDA receptor antagonist (glutamate regulator) for moderate to severe symptoms
 - Memantine (Namenda®)

Clinical research studies



- Clinical trials fuel progress toward treatments
- Participants receive a high standard of care

Contact us - we can help



alz.org[®]

- Alzheimer's Navigator
- Community Resource Finder
- ALZConnected
- Alzheimer's and Dementia Caregiver Center
- Safety Center



800.272.3900

- 24/7 Helpline – Available all day every day



alz.org/findus

- Support groups, education programs and more available in communities nationwide



training.alz.org

- Free online education programs available at training.alz.org

Get involved

