

## Learn more about Alzheimer's Disease with these resources:

### Alzheimer's Foundation of America

<https://alzfdn.org/>

### Alzheimer's Association

<https://www.alz.org/help-support/resources>

### National Institute on Aging

<http://bit.ly/2VxLHFu>

### Family Caregiver Alliance National Center on Caregiving

<https://www.caregiver.org/alzheimers-disease-caregiving>

### Geriatric Mental Health Foundation

<http://bit.ly/2M7LrtH>

### American Psychiatric Association

<https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/alzheimers>

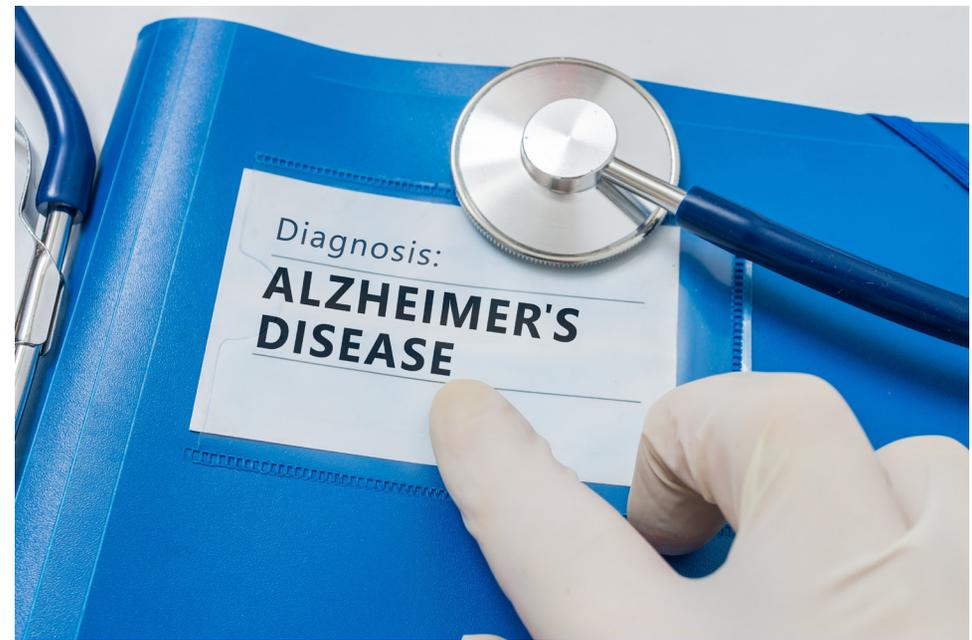


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## CARING FOR A LOVED ONE -WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW-

Alzheimer's Disease is an incurable neurological illness that results in slowly declining memory, thinking and reasoning. Symptoms usually develop slowly and get worse over time, becoming severe enough to interfere with daily tasks.

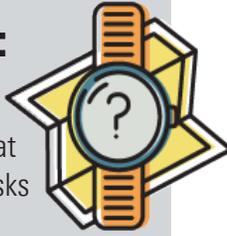
This brochure is intended to help you learn about the disease so that you can more easily adjust to changes in your loved one and prepare for the future.



## Stay alert to these changes in your loved one and the dangers associated with them.

### Forgetfulness:

- Defining factor of Alzheimer's disease that results in dangerous risks to health and safety.
- Examples include forgetting to turn off appliances such as a stove, forgetting where they are/ how to get home, or forgetting basic self-care such as bathing, brushing teeth and even eating.



### Environmental Safeguards:

- If necessary, install bathroom grab bars in tubs or near toilets to assist with balance. Use a shower chair for safety.
- Tape down or remove throw rugs. Keep walking pathways clear.
- Ensure your loved one's home lighting is adequate and that pathways throughout the home are as evenly lit as possible.
- Changes in levels of lighting and shadows can lead to disorientation.
- Use nightlights in bedrooms, bathrooms and hallways.
- Lock up items that might be hazardous. (Medications, power tools, knives, cleaning products, guns, etc.)

### Physical and Sensory Changes:

- May experience difficulty with balance resulting in falls as well as changes in vision, hearing or ability to sense extremes in temperatures or depth perception.
- This could result in injuries such as burns from bath water being too hot, an inability to hear warning sounds or alarms like smoke detectors, and falls especially on stairs.

### Behavioral Changes

- Easily confused or overwhelmed when faced with too many options/ activities at once
- Possible verbal or physical aggression toward others, especially in mid-stages of the disease
- Wandering around aimlessly at all hours of the day or night
- Sleeplessness and sundowning (*agitation or confusion in the evening and at night*)

### Being proactive is important. Create a safe environment through:

### Daily Activities:

- Establish routine times for bathing, mealtimes and bed. Adhere to your loved one's cultural/religious practices.
- Reduce distractions and stimulation during routine daily activities such as bedtime and mealtime.

- Prepare the bathroom in advance to ensure everything needed is within reach.
- Limit utensils and the food choices on your loved one's plate during mealtimes to prevent confusion.



## You may notice unique behaviors as a result of the disease. Ensure your loved one's safety with these tips.

**Wandering:** Any person diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease who can walk is at risk of wandering.

- Establish routines with activities.
- Keep car keys out of sight.
- Secure doors with locks not located in the line of vision (*such as slide bolts*) installed very high or very low.
- Install door alarms.
- Avoid busy places with distractions.
- Always supervise. Do not leave your loved one alone.

### Agitation | Aggression:

Verbal and physical aggression may occur for no apparent reason at all and can be very difficult to manage:

- Address any triggering factor of the aggression. These factors can include pain, thirst/hunger or over-stimulation.
- Communicate in simple statements. Avoid too many questions at once.
- Speak slowly and softly. Try to redirect your loved one to a relaxing activity. Approach them slowly. Do not argue.
- If you feel unsafe or cannot handle the situation, call 9-1-1. Make sure to tell the responders about the Alzheimer's disease.

**Sundowning** – An increase in confusion or agitation might occur in the evening and into the night.

- Reduce stimulation in the evening.
- Avoid stimulants such as nicotine and caffeine
- Minimize shadows that cause confusion.



- Promote relaxing with music or reading along with physical activity during the day.
- Limit naps during the day.