

10 Warning Signs of ALZHEIMER'S Disease

One's memory often changes as one grows older. But, memory loss that disrupts daily life is not a typical part of aging. It may be a symptom of dementia: a slow decline in memory, thinking, and reasoning skills. The most common form of dementia is Alzheimer's disease, a fatal disorder that results in loss of brain cells and function. This list can help you recognize the warning signs of Alzheimer's.



1 Memory changes that disrupt 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, or relying on memory aids (e.g., reminder notes or electronic devices) or family members for things they used to handle on their own. **What are typical age-related changes? 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 are typical age-related changes? 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 are typical age-**

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

4 Confusion about 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 are typical age-related changes? 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. In terms of perception, they may pass a mirror and think someone else is in the room. They may not realize they are the person in the mirror. **What are typical age-related changes? Vision changes related to cataracts or other eye conditions.**

6 New problems with words in speaking or writing

People with Alzheimer's may have trouble following or joining a conversation. They may



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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 are typical age-related changes? Sometimes having trouble finding the right word.**

7 Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps

A person with Alzheimer’s 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 are typical age-related changes? Misplacing things from time to time, such as a pair of glasses or the remote control.**

8 Decreased or poor judgment

People with Alzheimer’s may experience changes in judgment or in their ability to make decisions. For example, they may use poor judgment when dealing with money, such as giving large amounts to telemarketers. They may pay less attention to grooming or keeping themselves clean. **What are typical age-related changes? 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 are typical age-related changes? 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 are typical age-related changes? Developing very specific ways of doing things and becoming irritable when a routine is disrupted.**

It may be hard to know the difference between age-related changes and the first signs of Alzheimer’s disease. Ask yourself if this is something new. For example, if the person was never good at balancing a checkbook, struggling with this task is probably not a warning sign. But, if their ability to balance a checkbook has changed a lot, it is something to share with a doctor.

Some people may recognize changes in themselves before anyone else notices. Other times, friends and family will be the first to observe changes in the person’s memory, behavior, or abilities.

The following chart can help you understand the difference between Alzheimer’s disease and typical age-related changes.

What’s the Difference?

Signs of Alzheimer’s	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 what day it is and remembering later
Difficulty having a conversation	Sometimes forgetting what word to use
Misplacing things and being unable to retrace steps to find them	Losing things from time to time

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. Your local Alzheimer’s Association can help. You can reach them by calling the Alzheimer’s Association, Oklahoma and Arkansas Chapter, at (800) 272-3900 or (918) 481-7741, or by visiting [ww.alz.org/alzokar/](http://www.alz.org/alzokar/).

Source: 10 warning signs of Alzheimer’s disease.

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