



# Alzheimer's Disease

SHIP at Crescent Clinic



# What is it?

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- Alzheimer's disease is a progressive disease that interferes with the ability to form memories and other mental functions
  - With Alzheimer's disease, a patient's brain cells degenerate and die, which leads to the eventual loss of memory and basic motor skills
- Unfortunately, it's very common, affecting 1 out of 10 people over the age of 65
- Nearly 5.4 million Americans suffer from Alzheimer's
- One of the top 10 diseases that are the leading cause of death

# Causes

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- There is no definite cause for Alzheimer's, but doctors believe it is a combination of these three factors:
  - Genetic
  - Lifestyle
  - Environmental Factors
- Within the brain of a person with Alzheimer's there are two things:
  - Plaques: Plaques are clumps of protein that are found in the brain and interfere with cell-to-cell communication
  - Tangles: Tangles in the brain prevent the carrying of nutrients and other essential materials within the brain in order for brain cells to work properly and efficiently

# Risk Factors

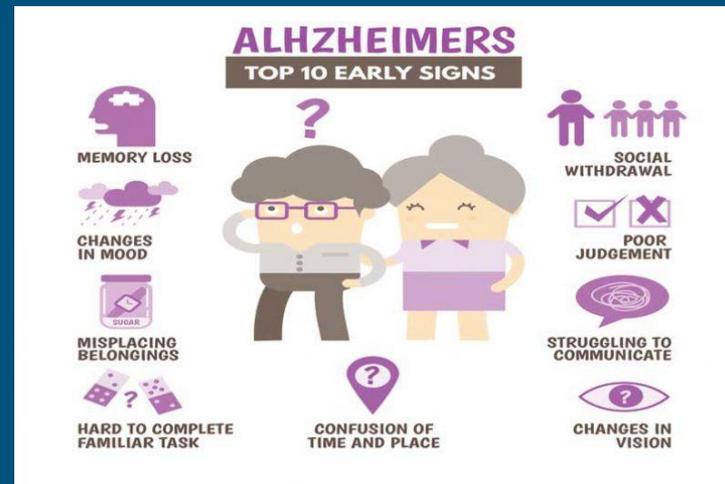
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- **Age**
  - The risk of developing Alzheimer's disease generally increases after the age of 65
  - Some people with genetic changes can experience symptoms starting at the early 30's
- **Sex**
  - Women are more likely to develop Alzheimer's than men
- **Past Trauma**
  - People who have had past head trauma have a greater risk of developing Alzheimer's disease
- **Family History/Genetics**
  - One is at greater risk for this disease if a first-degree relative has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's (ex: parents or siblings have the APOE-e4 risk gene)

# Symptoms

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- Wandering
- Social Withdrawal
- Disorientation
- Depression (an early offset symptom)
- Forgetful of recent conversations or names/people
- Impaired communication
- Mood Changes
- Delusions



# Symptoms Continued

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- People with Alzheimer's may sometimes ask the same question more than once, not realizing that they've already asked the same question before
- Often forget family members or close friends
- Misplace common items repeatedly (ex: car keys, glasses, where they parked their vehicle)
- Have trouble performing their daily tasks (ex: difficulty concentrating, explaining basic concepts)

# Treatment

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- There is no cure for Alzheimer's as of right now and no medication has been proven to slow down or stop the disease
- Medication
  - Medication can be taken to temporarily improve symptoms by increasing the amount of neurotransmitters in the brain
- Therapy
  - Therapy (such as art), can help improve cognitive function and stimulate daily functions in patients with Alzheimer's disease



# Living with Alzheimer's

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- Unfortunately, there is no set way to prevent Alzheimer's
- Support Groups
  - There are support groups for both family members of affected patients and for patients to learn and understand about Alzheimer's and how it will affect those diagnosed with this disease
- Coping Strategies
  - Developing coping strategies can help you go through the changes in your life or a loved one's life by being prepared for all possible outcomes
  - For example: Making a list of tasks that have become more challenging, finding solutions, or developing a daily routine to fit the needs of the person with Alzheimer's disease



alzheimer's association®

24/7 Helpline: 1 (800) 272-3900

“Our vision is a world without Alzheimer’s”

Feel free to ask me any remaining questions you may have!