

Patient Handout

Living Well with Alzheimer's Disease



Alzheimer's disease, the most common cause of dementia, affects the person's memory, thinking, and behavior. In the early stages, only new memories are affected, while memory for events long past remains. One of the earliest mental changes in Alzheimer's is the loss of awareness of the memory problem.

The beginning symptoms of Alzheimer's are different from one person to the next. Any change in personality, thinking, or behavior in a person with Alzheimer's is likely to be caused by the disease.

A person who has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's may have years of comfortable, good life remaining. As most people with the diagnosis are older, some may die of other causes before the slow progress of the brain disorder interferes with the quality of life. Slowing the progress of the disease and reducing the severity of its symptoms are therefore important goals in the management of Alzheimer's.

Strategies for living well

Alzheimer's disease

- drug treatment,
- stroke prevention,
- family education and support,
- counseling for the patient and family,
- day care for the patient, and respite care to relieve the family.

Get the Information You Need

Your doctor has information on medical treatment and stroke prevention. Information about other strategies is available through a nearby chapter of the Alzheimer's Association and through national organizations. In addition, many books, pamphlets, and newsletters on living with Alzheimer's disease are available. Ask your doctor and your public librarian for help in locating the latest information for families.

For more information on The AGS Foundation for Health in Aging call 1-800-563-4916 or visit www.healthinaging.org.

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