

1. What is the difference between Alzheimer's disease and dementia?

Alzheimer's disease is a type of dementia. Dementia is a loss of thinking, remembering, and reasoning skills that interferes with a person's daily life and activities. Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia among older people. Other types of dementia include frontotemporal disorders, Lewy body dementia, and vascular dementia.

2. What are the early signs of Alzheimer's disease?

Memory problems are typically one of the first signs of Alzheimer's disease, though different people may have different initial symptoms. A decline in other aspects of thinking, such as finding the right words, vision/spatial issues, and impaired reasoning or judgment, may also signal the very early stages of Alzheimer's disease.

Mild cognitive impairment, or MCI, is a condition that can also be an early sign of Alzheimer's disease — but not everyone with MCI will develop Alzheimer's. In addition to memory problems, movement difficulties and problems with the sense of smell have been linked to MCI.

3. What are the stages of Alzheimer's disease?

Alzheimer's disease progresses in several stages: preclinical, early (also called mild), middle (moderate), and late (severe). During the preclinical stage of Alzheimer's disease, people seem to be symptom-free, but toxic changes are taking place in the brain. A person in the early stage of Alzheimer's may exhibit the signs listed above.

As Alzheimer's disease progresses to the middle stage, memory loss and confusion grow worse, and people may have problems recognizing family and friends. As Alzheimer's disease becomes more severe, people lose the ability to communicate. They may sleep more, lose weight, and have trouble swallowing. Eventually, they need total care.

4. What are the causes of Alzheimer's disease?

Scientists do not yet fully understand what causes Alzheimer's disease in most people. In early-onset Alzheimer's, which occurs between a person's 30s and mid-60s, there may be a genetic component. Late-onset Alzheimer's, which usually develops in a person's mid-60s, arises from a complex series of age-related brain changes that occur over decades. The causes probably include a mix of these changes, along with genetic, environmental, and lifestyle factors. These factors affect each person differently.

Down syndrome, a genetic condition, increases a person's risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. Estimates suggest that 50% or more of people with Down syndrome will develop Alzheimer's disease and may begin to show symptoms in their 40s.

5. Is there a way to prevent Alzheimer's disease?

Currently, there is no definitive evidence about what can prevent Alzheimer's disease or age-related cognitive decline. What we do know is that a healthy lifestyle — one that includes a

healthy diet, physical activity, appropriate weight, and control of high blood pressure — can lower the risk of certain chronic diseases and boost overall health and well-being. Scientists are very interested in the possibility that a healthy lifestyle might delay, slow down, or even prevent Alzheimer's. They are also studying the role of social activity and intellectual stimulation in Alzheimer's disease risk.

6. Where can I find financial help for people with Alzheimer's disease or their caregivers?

There are several possible sources of financial help, depending on your situation. Looking into programs offered by the government is a great place to start. Several federal and state programs provide help with health care-related costs. Read *Paying for Care* for information on government programs and other payment sources.

The following organizations also offer assistance with finding financial help:

Eldercare Locator
(800) 677-1116

National Council on Aging
(571) 527-3900

Family Caregiver Alliance
(800) 445-8106

Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) for Medicaid/ALTCS
(800) 523-0231

7. For further assessments, would I need a referral to see a neurologist?

Under most circumstances, yes, to see a specialist such as a neurologist, typically a referral from a primary care physician is needed. Neurological services in Green Valley/Sahuarita:

Pima Neurology at Northwest Medical Center Sahuarita
(520) 416-7100
16260 S Rancho Sahuarita Blvd
Sahuarita, AZ 85629

Faculty Physicians and Surgeons of LLusm
(520) 638-5553
1260 S Campbell Ave
Green Valley, AZ 85614

Western Neurosurgery Ltd
(520) 881-8400
400 W Camino #B
Green Valley, AZ 85614

Parkinson Wellness Clinic, LLC
(520) 780-8748
360 W Vista Hermosa Dr
Green Valley, AZ 85614

8. Are there any adult drop-in centers/adult day programs?

There are two in Pima County:

La Posada Community Services
(520) 648-8131
350 E Morningside Rd
Green Valley, AZ 85614

SandRuby Community Programs
(520) 547-6036
5101 E Farness Dr
Tucson, AZ 85712

9. Are there social opportunities for care partners and their loved ones living with dementia?

La Posada has social activities which are open to the general public. (Activities calendar on separate form)

Social media such as Facebook community groups specific to Green Valley.

Memory cafes.

10. Are there caregiver support groups available in-person/virtually?

There are many opportunities for networking and support including memory cafes. (Support groups on separate form)

