



FOR MOST PEOPLE, ALZHEIMER'S SYMPTOMS APPEAR IN THEIR 60S

ALZHEIMER'S: THE SIGNS

The first symptoms of Alzheimer's vary from person to person. Memory problems are typically one of the first signs. Decline in non-memory aspects of cognition, such as word-finding, vision/spatial issues, and impaired reasoning or judgment, may also signal the very early stages of Alzheimer's disease. And some people may be diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment. As the disease progresses, people experience greater memory loss and other cognitive difficulties.

Alzheimer's disease progresses in several stages: preclinical, mild (sometimes called early-stage), moderate, and severe (sometimes called late-stage).

MILD ALZHEIMER'S

Alzheimer's is often diagnosed at this stage. Problems can include:

- **Memory loss**
- **Poor judgment leading to bad decisions**
- **Loss of spontaneity and sense of initiative**
- **Taking longer to complete normal daily tasks**
- **Repeating questions**
- **Trouble handling money and paying bills**
- **Wandering and getting lost**
- **Losing things or misplacing them in odd places**
- **Mood and personality changes**
- **Increased anxiety and/or aggression**

MODERATE ALZHEIMER'S

In this stage, more intensive supervision and care become necessary, which can be difficult for many spouses and families. Symptoms may include:

- **Increased memory loss and confusion**
- **Inability to learn new things**
- **Difficulty with language and problems with reading, writing, and working with numbers**
- **Problems coping with new situations**
- **Difficulty carrying out multistep tasks, such as getting dressed**
- **Problems recognizing family and friends**
- **Hallucinations, delusions, and paranoia**
- **Inappropriate outbursts of anger**
- **Restlessness, agitation, anxiety, tearfulness, wandering –especially in the late afternoon or evening.**

SEVERE ALZHEIMER'S

People with severe Alzheimer's cannot communicate and are completely dependent on others for their care. Near the end, the person may be in bed most or all of the time as the body shuts down. Their symptoms often include:

- **Inability to communicate**
- **Weight loss**
- **Seizures**
- **Skin infections**
- **Difficulty swallowing**
- **Groaning, moaning, or grunting**
- **Increased sleeping**
- **Loss of bowel and bladder control**

A common cause of death for people with Alzheimer's disease is aspiration pneumonia. This type of pneumonia develops when a person cannot swallow properly and takes food or liquids into the lungs instead of air. There is currently no cure for Alzheimer's, though there are medicines that can treat the symptoms of the disease.

For more information visit: www.alz.org