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INFORMATION ON ALZHEIMER'S

What is it?

In olden days, when an elderly individual exhibited: memory loss, behavior changes or repetitive questioning, they would be considered to have, Organic Brain Syndrome (OBS). Today OBS is better defined and differentiated as Alzheimer's Disease (AD). Medically speaking, significant changes occur in the brain affecting the nerve cells that are responsible for learning and memory function. These cells become damaged and die eventually causing a person to lose control of thoughts, words, actions and skills.

How do you know if you or a loved one has AD?

AD is far different from

the day-to-day forgetfulness that we as well as our offspring and grandchildren experience. Ask your grandchild what they learned in school today and the answer is probably "HUH"? It doesn't mean they have AD.



Memory loss, forgetfulness, lack of focus or short attention span

are not uncommon in us all, no matter our age or how intelligent or engaged in the 'here and now' we are. When AD does become a problem it interferes with our ability to function, impairs our judgment, and can cause injury or harm when unsupervised.

People with Alzheimer's often find it hard to complete daily tasks. Sometimes people can have trouble driving to a familiar location, managing a budget at work or even remembering the rules for a favorite game.



What are the stages of AD and what are some symptoms of each stage?

Most professionals ascribe to the premise that there are three stages of AD: EARLY, PROGRESSING and LATER, which is often referred to as MILD, MODERATE and SEVERE.

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OUR CAREGIVERS...

Our caregivers are experienced with Diabetes, Dementia, Rehabilitation, Paraplegics, Parkinson's, and any other needs that you or your family desires. We have been in

business for over 12 years located in the Elm Grove community. We are a 24/7, Short Term, or Long-term care provider. We assist those who are in need or are recover-

ing from an injury or illness. Contact us today to set up a free complimentary assessment and see what we can do for you and your family.

ALZHEIMER'S CONTINUED...

In the **early stage, (mild)** which can be present for years, we generally notice forgetfulness, inability to focus or concentrate and we often forget names. Don't panic. This happens in people without AD as well but specifically in AD cases, these same symptoms are usually more pronounced and have a negative impact on the affected person.

In the **progressing stage (moderate)** we see more significant changes: These may include:

Inability to get your thoughts out, interruptions in speech due to word searching, poor judgment, confusion, giving up reading due to inability to decipher words or meaning, breakdown of language control or skills, speech difficulties, and/or forgetfulness that impairs daily function.

In the **later stage (severe)**, the changes are much more dramatic. The AD victim may forget how to eat, who friends and family are, become quite apathetic,

anxious, depressed or agitated and aggressive. They may become suspicious, wander, lose control of speech or experience difficulty swallowing. Oftentimes, the AD victim becomes unaware of their surroundings and may just engage in repetitive behaviors like: counting, acting out, and disruptiveness. The body is not usually affected by AD, but you may see: incontinence, drooling and other things happening due to associated loss of memory-function.

How is AD diagnosed?

AD can have quite the impact on the lives of family and friends. It is best if you suspect AD in an individual, to have the person evaluated by a health care professional. This may be your doctor, a geriatric care manager, social worker or other professional trained in the evaluative process. There are simple tests like the Mini Mental Status Exam. This exam is made up of a series of questions with points which are awarded for each correct answer. This exam can provide a good indication of cognitive impairment.

How is AD treated?

AD is not reversible; however, the progression of the disease can be slowed. There are a few drugs on the market that are routinely used such as: Namenda, Aricept and Exelon. It is best to work with a geriatrician when AD is suspected so that the proper diagnosis and treatment can be implemented. A Geriatrician is not similar to a doctor who treats the elderly.

Geriatricians are specialists who have acquired many years of experience through treating AD●



Alzheimer's Association

For more information on Alzheimer's Disease contact your local representative:
1-800-272-3900

Urinary Tract Infection

A urinary tract infection is not uncommon as we age or have an indwelling catheter. It's ironic that something so simple can cause so much discomfort, and if not dealt with effectively, can even lead to a major infection and ultimately cause serious health issues. A UTI begins in the bladder or kidney as bacteria colonize (over-populate) and overpower your body's own infection-fighting immune system. The symptoms of a UTI don't always follow a pattern, i.e. fever. Sometimes, a person's temperature might be normal (below

98.6*) or be low-grade (below 100*) but they experience behavior changes such as sleeping more or less than usual, agitation, sudden confusion or delirium, crying out or just disengaged from their normal routine.

UTI's can be painless, the urine need not be foul-smelling or dark in color so it often goes untreated for days after it starts and then perhaps a trip to the emergency room and hospitalization occurs.

Treatment begins with procuring a urine sample which is cul-

tured and tested for sensitivity to various antibiotics. It's important that the right antibiotic is prescribed or the effectiveness decreases and the strength of the invading bacteria increases.

If you are aware of what is happening in your body, you can prevent those trips to the ER and possible hospital stays. The best place for an elder person is home, where the heart is.

Stay well,

Robert