

What Is Alzheimer's Disease?



Alzheimer's disease is a progressive disorder that causes the deterioration of brain cells. As brain cells waste away and die, patients exhibit a continuous decline in thinking, behavioral, and social skills that disrupt their ability to function independently. The disease attacks the part of the brain that is responsible for memory, thoughts, and language. Symptoms are often not apparent until years after the disease process begins.

10 Early Signs and Symptoms:

1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life
2. Challenges in planning or solving problems
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks
4. Confusion about time or place
5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships
6. New problems with words in speaking or writing
7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps
8. Decreased or poor judgment
9. Withdrawal from work or social activities
10. Changes in mood and personality

While there's currently no cure for Alzheimer's, there are treatments that may change disease progression and help treat symptoms. Cholinesterase inhibitors may help boost cellular communication within the brain. Memantine is a medication that may help slow the progression of symptoms in moderate to severe Alzheimer's disease. Antidepressants are sometimes prescribed to aid with behavioral symptoms.

If you notice any of the warning signs of Alzheimer's in yourself or someone you know, don't ignore them. Schedule an appointment with your doctor. With early detection, you can explore treatments that may provide some relief of symptoms and help you maintain a level of independence longer, as well as increase your chances of participating in clinical drug trials that help advance research.

Source: Alzheimer's Association (alz.org)

Total health