

# Signs and Symptoms

- Memory Loss
- Difficulty Performing Familiar Tasks
- Problems with Language
- Disorientation to Time and Place
- Poor or Decreased Judgment
- Problems with Complex Thinking
- Misplacing Things
- Changes in Mood or Behavior
- Changes in Personality
- Loss of Initiative

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## Understanding Alzheimer's Disease



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Definition  
Risk Factors  
Signs & Symptoms  
Treatment  
Staying Healthy  
Healthy Caregiving

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*Alzheimer's Disease is NOT a mental illness.  
It is a disease that damages the brain.*

## Defining Alzheimer's Disease

Alzheimer's is a disease that physically affects the brain. During the course of the disease the body produces extra substances that gather in the tissue of the brain. This causes the brain cells to die and leads to problems with memory, thinking, behavior, and emotions.

## Risk Factors

Although scientists have not yet discovered what causes Alzheimer's Disease, they have identified risk factors that could be responsible.

**Age** is the greatest known risk factor. The older a person is the greater their chance of developing the disease.

Another risk factor is **Family History**. If a family member has the disease the chance of developing it yourself slightly increases.

## Treatment

Currently there is no known cure for Alzheimer's Disease. There are several medications that can be taken to treat symptoms associated with the disease or even delay the worsening of symptoms. These medications can be hard to find, expensive, and do have side effects. Herbal remedies, vitamins, and dietary supplements are also used. For more information contact your doctor, pharmacist, or the National Council on Ageing.



## Keeping Your Brain Healthy

Taking care of your brain is as important as taking care of your body. Having a healthy diet and staying mentally, physically, and socially active may protect and strengthen brain cells.

## Healthy Caregiving

Caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's Disease can be very stressful. Here are a few steps to help you stay healthy.

- See a doctor at the first signs of the disease.
- Know what resources are available to you.
- Learn about the disease.
- Get help from family and friends.
- Take care of yourself.
- Manage your level of stress.
- Accept changes as they occur.
- Know that the care you provide will make a difference.
- Give yourself credit for doing the best you can.

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Alzheimer's Disease is not a normal part of ageing. It can affect anyone regardless of their ethnic, economic, social, or geographical status.