



## September 21<sup>st</sup> is World Alzheimer's Day

World Alzheimer's Day, September 21st of each year, is a day on which Alzheimer's organizations around the world concentrate their efforts on raising awareness about Alzheimer's and dementia.

- ✧ Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia, a group of disorders that impairs mental functioning.
- ✧ Every 68 seconds, someone develops Alzheimer's disease. At current rates, experts believe the number of Americans living with Alzheimer's will quadruple to as many as 16 million by the year 2050.

Alzheimer's disease is often called a family disease, because the chronic stress of watching a loved one slowly decline affects everyone.

### Definition:

Dementia is a loss of brain function that occurs with certain diseases. Alzheimer's disease (AD), is one form of dementia that gradually gets worse over time. It affects memory, thinking, and behavior.

### Causes, incidence, and risk factors:

You are more likely to get Alzheimer's disease (AD) if you:

- ✧ Are older (Developing AD is not a part of normal aging).
- ✧ Have a close blood relative, such as a brother, sister, or parent with AD.
- ✧ Have certain genes linked to AD.

The following may also increase your risk, although this is not well proven:

- ✧ Being female.
- ✧ Having high blood pressure for a long time.
- ✧ History of head trauma.

### Symptoms:

Dementia symptoms include difficulty with many areas of mental function, including:

- ✧ Emotional behavior or personality.
- ✧ Problems in Language , Memory , Perception , Thinking and judgment (cognitive skills).
- ✧ Difficulty performing tasks that take some thought.
- ✧ Getting lost on familiar routes.
- ✧ Language problems, such as trouble finding the name of familiar objects.
- ✧ Losing interest in things previously enjoyed, flat mood.
- ✧ Personality changes and loss of social skills. Delusions, depression, agitation.
- ✧ Change in sleep patterns, often waking up at night.
- ✧ Difficulty doing basic tasks, such as preparing meals, choosing proper clothing, and driving.

- ✚ Difficulty reading or writing.
- ✚ Forgetting details about current events , events in your own life history, losing awareness of who you are.
- ✚ Hallucinations, arguments, striking out, and violent behavior.
- ✚ Poor judgment and loss of ability to recognize danger.
- ✚ Using the wrong word, mispronouncing words, speaking in confusing sentences.
- ✚ Withdrawing from social contact.
- ✚ Incontinence , Swallowing problems.

People with severe AD can no longer:

- ✚ Understand language.
- ✚ Recognize family members.
- ✚ Perform basic activities of daily living, such as eating, dressing, and bathing.

### **Coping and support:**

Because AD cannot be cured and is degenerative, the affected person increasingly relies on others for assistance.

If you're caring for someone with Alzheimer's, you can help them cope with the disease by being there to listen, reassuring the person that life can still be enjoyed, providing support, and doing your best to help the person retain dignity and self-respect.

A calm and stable home environment can help reduce behavior problems. New situations, noise, large groups of people, being rushed or pressed to remember, or being asked to do complicated tasks can cause anxiety. As a person with Alzheimer's becomes upset, the ability to think clearly declines even more.

### **Caring for the caregiver:**

If you're a caregiver for someone with Alzheimer's, you can help yourself by:

- ✚ Learning as much about the disease as you can.
- ✚ Asking questions of doctors, social workers and others involved in the care of your loved one.
- ✚ Calling on friends or other family members for help when you need it.
- ✚ Joining a support group.

### **Prevention:**

- ✚ Right now, there's no proven way to prevent Alzheimer's disease.
- ✚ Research into prevention strategies is ongoing.
- ✚ The strongest evidence so far suggests that you may be able to lower your risk of Alzheimer's disease by reducing your risk of heart disease.

Many of the same factors that increase your risk of heart disease can also increase your risk of Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia. Important factors that may be involved include high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, excess weight and diabetes.

### **Treatment:**

- ✚ There is no cure for Alzheimer's disease; available treatments offer relatively small symptomatic benefit but remain palliative in nature.
- ✚ Current treatments can be divided into pharmaceutical, psychosocial and caregiving.

### **Reference Links:**

- ✚ <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/alzheimers-disease/basics/prevention/con-20023871>
- ✚ <http://www.alzinfo.org/08/alzheimers/world-alzheimers-day>
- ✚ <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001767/>

**For any enquiry or assistance please contact:** [wellness@medicaretpa.co.in](mailto:wellness@medicaretpa.co.in)

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