

What are support groups and where can I find one?

Support groups are invaluable for caregivers. It can be encouraging and helpful to speak with other families and caregivers that have gone through what you are going through. Local health care facilities and Alzheimer's organizations can direct you to support groups in your community.



Facts about Alzheimer's disease

- Alzheimer's affects approximately six million Americans
- One out of three families in the United States are affected by Alzheimer's disease.
- 10% of Americans over the age of 65, 20% of people between the ages of 75 and 84, and nearly 50% of those over 85 have Alzheimer's disease.
- 14 million Americans are expected to have Alzheimer's by the middle of the next century unless a cure or prevention is found.
- People with Alzheimer's live an average of seven to eight years with the disease and some have it 20 years or more.
- Women account for 70% - 80% of primary caregivers.
- Approximately 50% of caregivers live with the Alzheimer's patient.
- The average age for caregivers is 50 to 60 years old.
- Caregivers spend an average of 70 hours a week caring for the person with Alzheimer's.

Contact the following list of resources to find out more about Alzheimer's.

T. Stuart Payne Memory Care Center,
(540) 380-2986

Alzheimer's Association/Central
& Western Virginia Chapter,
(540) 345-7900

LOA/Area Agency on Aging,
(540) 345-00451

Please call us at
540-380-2986

An expert in Alzheimer's care is available to discuss your particular situation, our services, or simply lend a caring, attentive ear. You may also order additional complimentary copies of this brochure.

The Richfield Senior Education Initiative is a community service program sponsored by Richfield Retirement Community. In keeping with our not-for-profit mission, the Initiative offers helpful information and support, free of charge, to area seniors and their families through the distribution of educational materials and sponsorship of community events.

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Facts About Alzheimer's...
Frequently Asked Questions and More



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DRAFT FOR REVIEW
AND DISCUSSION

How to get the right care for your loved one with Alzheimer's disease.

Alzheimer's disease affects some six million Americans today. In fact, experts predict that it may affect as many as eight to ten million people by the year 2020. The questions and answers that follow explain Alzheimer's and offer suggestions for getting help.

What is Alzheimer's disease?

Alzheimer's is a disease that attacks brain cells and results in impaired memory, thinking and behavior.

What causes Alzheimer's?

Scientists are still not certain what causes Alzheimer's. Family history and age have been identified as potential causes, however, it is likely that a number of factors contribute to it. Although there is not a known cure for Alzheimer's, each year researchers are uncovering more clues and developing treatment options.



How is Alzheimer's diagnosed?

There is no single, comprehensive test to diagnose Alzheimer's. As a result, doctors and specialists rule out other conditions through a process of elimination. A variety of exams are conducted along with a review of the patient's medical history. To inquire about these tests, you should contact your family physician.



How does the disease progress?

Alzheimer's disease affects people in different ways, making it difficult for medical professionals to predict how an individual's disease will progress. Generally short-term memory is affected first. Later, the disease affects cognitive and physical functions.



Isn't memory loss a normal part of aging?

Everyone forgets now and then. Some people tend to forget more often as they grow older. Alzheimer's is more serious than lapses in memory because it is a disease that destroys brain cells. People with Alzheimer's experience difficulty communicating, learning, thinking and reasoning. As a result, Alzheimer's has an impact on a person's work, social and family life.

What treatments are available?

Medication and non-drug therapies are available to reduce some behavioral symptoms such as depression, sleeplessness and agitation. Unfortunately, there is no cure or medical treatment available to stop the progression of the disease.

What should I do if my loved one is diagnosed with Alzheimer's?

It is very important for family members and caregivers to learn as much as possible about the disease. This information will help you understand what the person with Alzheimer's is going through and what you can do to help them. The family members and caregivers are encouraged to work with the patient's doctor to plan their loved one's care.

