



Is it Alzheimer's? How to Spot Cognitive Decline

Have you noticed your loved one exhibiting occasional forgetfulness? While memory loss has often been considered a normal part of the aging process, today we know that it can be evidence of something more serious: Alzheimer's disease.

Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia, a general term for memory loss and cognitive decline that can interfere with daily life. Alzheimer's disease accounts for 60 to 80 percent of all dementia cases.

Alzheimer's disease impacts over 5 million Americans each year and is now the

[sixth leading cause of death](#) in the U.S. While some signs of aging are common milestones, catching warnings at their earliest onset can help families navigate the challenges of a memory disorder.

Early on, individuals may exhibit occasional forgetfulness, but are still able to function independently. As the disease progresses, a person may become more confused, have trouble remembering personal information, and can struggle performing routine tasks.



The following signs may mean that your loved one is experiencing the early stages of a potential memory disorder:

- **Increased short-term memory loss and forgetfulness** – A common early symptom of Alzheimer's disease is difficulty remembering new information. Challenges remembering daily or weekly recurring activities are also potential indications of something more than typical forgetfulness. These signs of memory loss often increase over time, and you may find this person repeats themselves frequently, or forgets critical information like the dosage for their medication, or when to take it.
- **A shift in personality** – If a person's mood fluctuates depending on the time of day, or they're displaying odd behaviors like accusing others of doing or saying something inaccurate, or their tone of voice alters inconsistently – it could be an indication of memory-loss complications.
- **A change in hygiene** – Is a loved one's hair uncombed or are they constantly forgetting to brush their teeth? Are they no longer going to the barber or hair stylist with their usual regularity? These are indications that a person's memory may be changing as it becomes harder to perform their routine personal tasks.

If you notice signs of cognitive decline in your loved one, it may be time to escalate care and treatment. A good place to begin is an appointment with your loved one's primary care provider.

Fortunately, studies also show that with cognitive stimulation programs, individuals can strengthen and improve certain brain regions to delay or decrease the risk of dementia. These programs have been shown to help seniors improve their concentration and overall memory ability through creative and engaging activities.

Today's seniors have more options than ever when it comes to treating the effects of cognitive decline. Take steps now to help your loved one live fully for years to come.

Dedicated memory care programs are designed to care for those living with Alzheimer's and other memory disorders by keeping them active and engaged. Prestige's [Expressions memory care program](#) uses innovative care techniques and life enrichment programming to create an environment in which residents can live a productive and active life where they're treated with dignity and respect.