



“Doc, I’m worried about my memory.”

As a physician, I have heard that particular phrase many times. This little question is usually translated to mean, “I’m really worried I may have Alzheimer’s.” The diagnosis of dementia and specifically Alzheimer’s type of dementia strikes fear in the heart of patients and families alike.

Forgetfulness occurs in everyone and is generally not dementia. As I often tell patients, “remembering you forgot something is normal, forgetting you forgot, is not.” In general, if it is the patient complaining of poor memory, then it is less concerning and may be a normal process. If, however, it is the family who reports that grandma is more forgetful and grandma doesn’t think so, I’m much more suspicious.

Dementia, is a general term that is used to indicate a person has developed difficulties with reasoning, judgment, and memory that are severe enough to interfere with a person’s independence and daily activities. Of the dementias, Alzheimer’s is the most common type accounting for 60 to 80 percent of all cases.

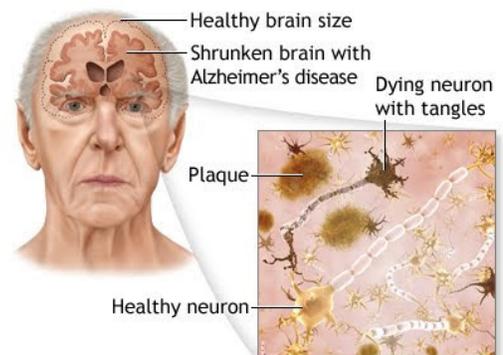
Alzheimer’s disease is associated with the death of neurons (nerve cells) in important parts of the brain. Currently, medical science does not know how or why it develops, but does know that the brain ends up with a protein called beta amyloid leading to disorganized masses of protein fibers in the brain known as neurofibrillary tangles.

Throughout the article, I will provide you with some early signs to look for, risk factors, prevention tips, and next steps when a diagnosis is made to help patients and their families.

It is unusual to be diagnosed with Alzheimer’s dementia before the age of 65. However, as we age, the likelihood increases effectively doubling every five years starting at age 60. As with all dementias, memory impairment is the most common initial symptom.

In patients with Alzheimer’s, deficits in other areas may appear with or after the development of memory impairment. Difficulties with executive function and the ability to perform complex sequential tasks, is often present relatively early. It can be a warning sign if the person who usually pays the bills is no longer willing or able to do so.

Even a simple task like grocery shopping really requires a number of sequential complex tasks from determining what is needed, purchasing the items, taking them home and putting them away. If suddenly one spouse or parent no longer wants or cannot do this, you should bring this up to your healthcare provider for further evaluation as this may be an early sign.



ADAM.



There are a number of factors that seem to lead to an increase in development of dementia later in life. Untreated high blood pressure, smoking and diabetes are associated with vascular dementia and seem to also increase one's risk for Alzheimer's type dementia as well.

Certain healthy lifestyles have been associated with a decrease in dementia. These are not new or surprising. Stay physically and mentally active, socially engaged and learning new tasks or "exercising your brain" with crossword puzzles, Sudoku or learning a new language all seem to help. Watching TV and sitting and "being entertained" does not count. You must get involved physically and mentally.

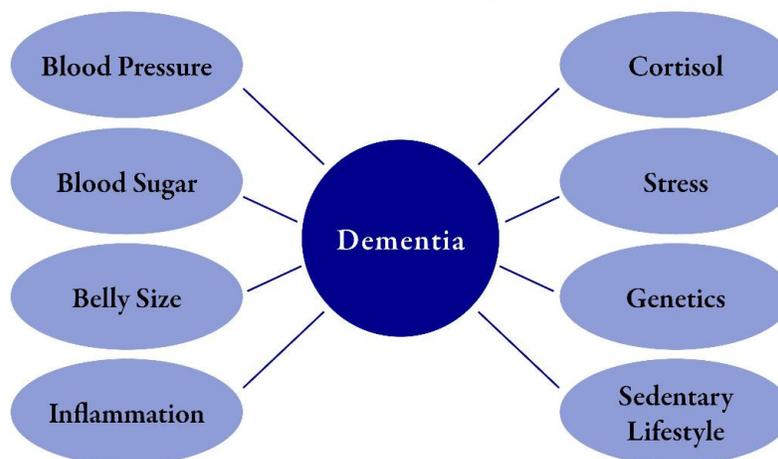
If you or a family member are diagnosed with Alzheimer's dementia, know that you are not alone and there are resources to help along the way. Every patient's journey is unique, but there are many similarities in the process. Learn about the disease and how it progresses so you are prepared for the next step in the journey.

One book that I recommend to all patients and families is: "Thirty-Six Hour Day: A Family Guide to Caring for Persons with Alzheimer's Disease." It is available at most libraries. This can help give a better picture of what the journey looks like and to help you prepare for the next step learning from others who have already been down this road.

Seek out a support group. Most churches or community and senior centers offer a daycare type option and group meetings that can provide resources to help with the day to day life.

Lastly, it is very important to have family at all medical visits. If changes made, everyone will need to be on the same page. Physician, patient, and family.

FACTORS THAT INCREASE DEMENTIA RISK





Written by Terry Grover, M.D.

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Healthy Corner Recipe
The Alzheimer's Prevention Cookbook
By: Dr. Marwan Sabbagh and Beau MacMillan, copyright 2012

Kale, Blueberry, and pomegranate salad
Serves 4, Prep time and total time 15 minutes
Ingredients:
3 bunches kale, stem and chopped
1 cup fresh blueberries
2 medium carrots, peeled and shredded
1/2 cup pomegranate seeds
1/3 cup pumpkin seeds, toasted
1/3 cup sliced almonds, toasted
1 Tbsp chopped fresh mint leaves
1/2 cup Soy-Sesame Vinaigrette or your own dressing
Salt and Freshly ground black pepper to your liking



Directions:

1. Combine the kale, blueberries, carrots, pomegranate seeds, pumpkin seeds, almonds, and mint in medium bowl and toss well.
2. Drizzle with a vinaigrette dressing and toss again.
3. Season to taste with salt and pepper and serve right away

QPIC Corner



In Network Labs



Article provided by
Terry Grover, M.D.
Board Certified Internal Medicine
Best Doctors in America
Best Doctors in San Antonio

HealthTexas—Boerne
105 Falls Court, Suite 100
Boerne, TX 78006-2985
Telephone: (830) 249-3800
www.healthtexas.org



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