

Understanding Dementia

Margaret Haden

Manager, Walk to End Alzheimer's
Alzheimer's Association

Michelle Haub

Special Programs Leader
Parkinson's Program & Memory Program
Meadowlark Retirement Community

Katie Sigman

Special Programs Coordinator
Parkinson's Program & Memory Program
Meadowlark Retirement Community



Learning Objectives

- **Understand how brains, bodies, and behaviors change with dementia.**
- **Implement best practices for engagement and communication.**
- **Expand knowledge of strategies to enhance meaningful interactions.**
- **Understand the current facts and figures on dementia.**





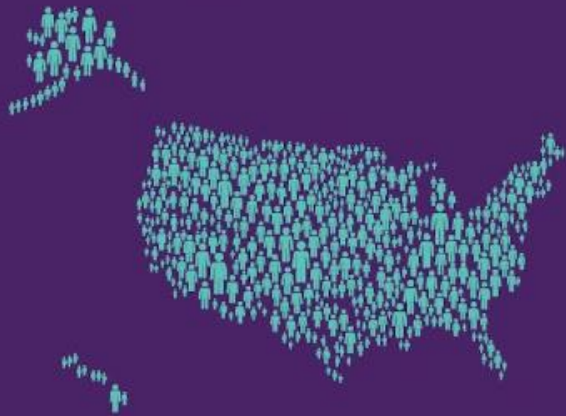
The Impact of **Alzheimer's and Dementia** in Our Community

www.alz.org/hello



2025 ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE FACTS AND FIGURES

Over
7 MILLION
Americans are living with
Alzheimer's



1 IN 3

older adults dies
with Alzheimer's or
another dementia



IT KILLS MORE THAN

breast cancer



prostate cancer

COMBINED

In 2025, Alzheimer's
and other dementias
will cost the nation

**\$384
BILLION**

By 2050,
these costs
could rise to nearly

**\$1
TRILLION**

The lifetime
risk for Alzheimer's
at age 45 is

**1
IN**

5

for
women

**1
IN**

10

for
men

Between
2000 and
2022 deaths
from heart
disease have
decreased

2.1%



while deaths
from
Alzheimer's
disease have
increased

142%



These caregivers
provided more than
19 billion hours
valued at nearly

**\$413
BILLION**



**NEARLY
12
MILLION**

Americans provide
unpaid care for people
with Alzheimer's or
other dementias



**UP TO
4 IN 5**

Americans feel
optimistic about new
Alzheimer's treatments
in the next decade



of Americans would
want a medication to
slow the progression of
Alzheimer's following
a diagnosis

Over

7 MILLION

Americans are living
with Alzheimer's

About the Alzheimer's Association

The Alzheimer's Association leads the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia — by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support.

Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's and all other dementia[®].





Dementia

An umbrella term for loss of memory and other thinking abilities **severe enough to interfere with daily life.**



Alzheimer's

Vascular

Lewy body

Frontotemporal

Other, including Huntington's

Mixed dementia: dementia from more than one cause



Populations at **Higher Risk**

2X

Black Americans are about **twice as likely** as White Americans to have Alzheimer's or another dementia.



Hispanic Americans are **one and a half times** as likely to have the disease as White Americans.



Almost **two-thirds** of Americans living with Alzheimer's are women.

What is **Alzheimer's**?



Alzheimer's is a brain disease that causes problems with **memory, thinking and behavior**. Symptoms eventually grow severe enough to interfere with daily tasks.



Alzheimer's is a progressive disease, where **symptoms gradually worsen** over a number of years.



In the early stage, memory loss is mild. But as the disease progresses, **individuals will need around-the-clock care**. The disease is ultimately fatal.





10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's

1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life

2. Challenges in planning or solving problems

3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks

4. Confusion with time or place

5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships

6. New problems with words in speaking or writing

7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps

8. Decreased or poor judgment

9. Withdrawal from work or social activities

10. Changes in mood and personality

Importance of Early Detection



Pay attention to any changes in **memory**, thinking or behavior that you notice in yourself or someone else.



If you see changes that are new or unusual, **take action** by having a conversation with a doctor, or a trusted family member or friend.

Treatments for Alzheimer's

While there's currently no cure for Alzheimer's, there are treatments that can change disease progression, and drug and non-drug options that may help treat symptoms. Talk to your doctor to learn more about treatment options. Learn more at [alz.org/treatments](https://www.alz.org/treatments).



New treatments are available that slow disease progression for those in the earliest stages.



Drug and non-drugs options are available that **may help treat symptoms**, such as memory loss and confusion.



Everyone experiences Alzheimer's differently, treatments **work in varying degrees and are not effective for everyone**.





Take Charge of Your Brain Health



There are several risk factors for cognitive decline and dementia. Some, such as age, we can't control. But there are **actions we can take to improve our brain health.**

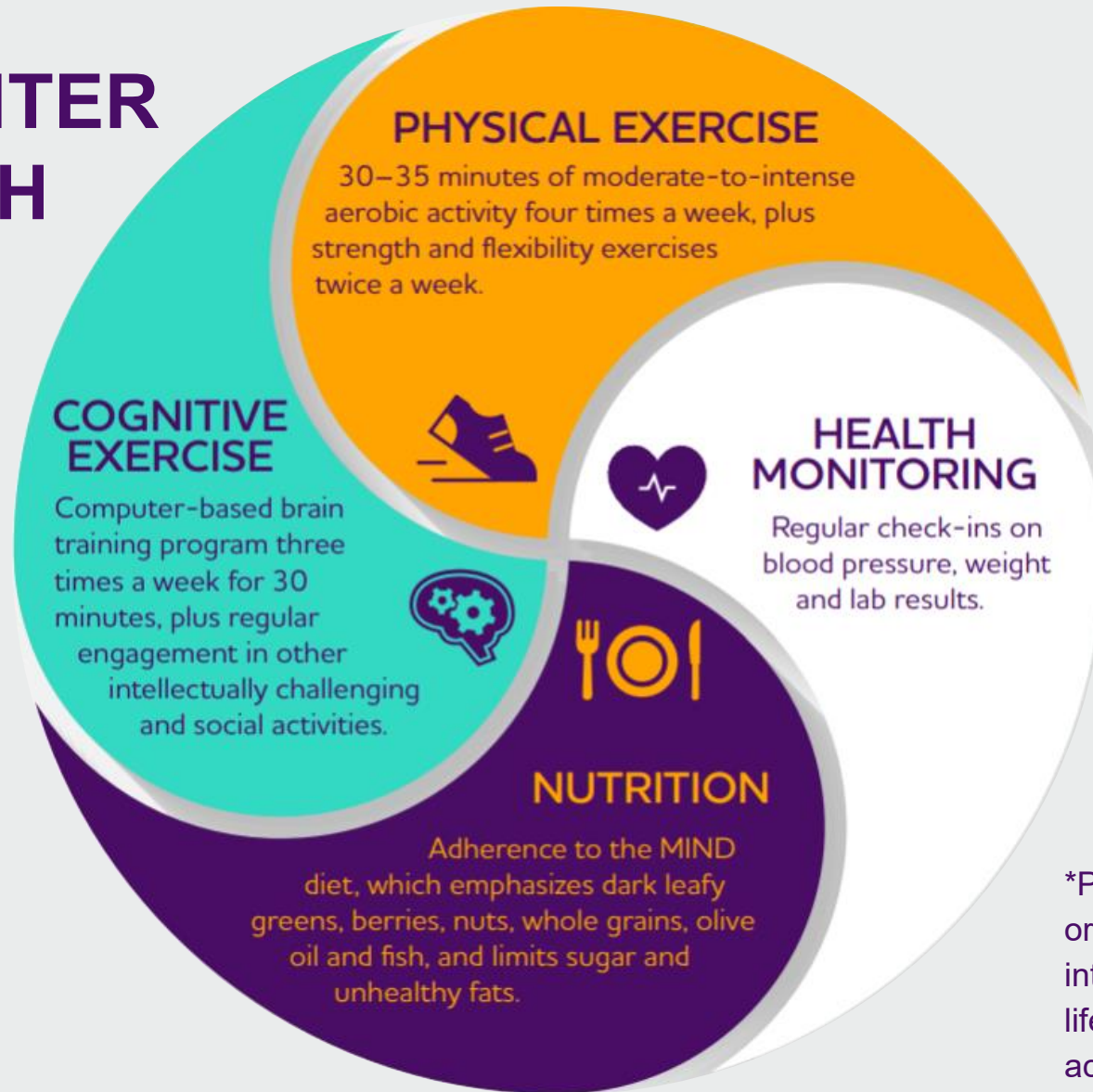


Growing evidence shows that **healthy living can lower the risk of cognitive decline and possibly dementia.**



Our brains need to be taken care of at all ages. It is never **too early or too late** to take action to protect brain health.

THE U.S. POINTER BRAIN HEALTH RECIPE*



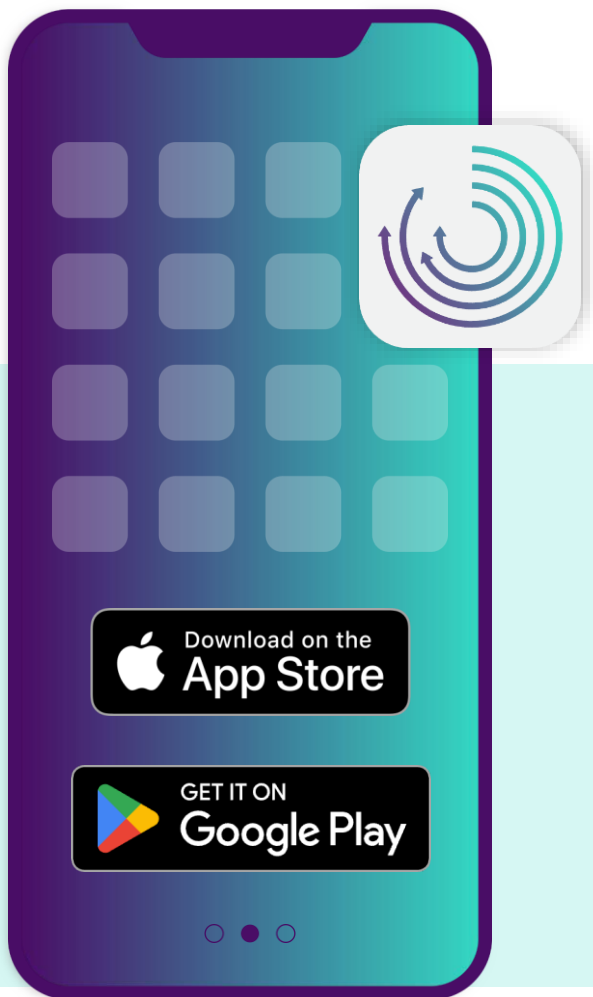
*Participants followed either a self-guided or structured lifestyle program. The two interventions both focused on the same lifestyle domains, but differed in structure, accountability and support provided.



My ALZ Journey

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION®

**Support, guidance
and connection for
newly diagnosed
people and care
partners –
all in one app**



Free mobile app for newly diagnosed individuals and care partners



Provides personalized guidance, trusted resources and local connections



Helps users understand their diagnosis, stay independent and plan for the future



Connects users to their local Alzheimer's Association chapter for programs and support



Built with input from people living with dementia and care partners



Understanding Dementia

Michelle Haub, MS, CCC-SLP, Special Programs Leader

Katie Sigman, Special Programs Coordinator

October 15, 2025



<https://beinginthemoment.org/know-how/see-the-person/>

PERCEPTUAL CHANGES IN DEMENTIA

CONFUSION SUSPICION

May refuse medication,
thinking they already
took it.

May think you are
someone from their past.

VISION

Field of vision can narrow
with both age and
dementia.

Depth perception changes.

SLOWED RESPONSE

It can be hard for
someone to understand
what you are saying and it
may take them longer to
process thoughts.

DEMENTIA-ASSOCIATED RESPONSES

WANDERING

Orientation? Might be trying to get home, go to work, etc.

AGGRESSION

Can be verbal or physical.

REPETITION

Of behavior or words.
May repeat questions due to decreased immediate and/or short-term memory.

TOOLS FOR YOUR INTERACTIONS WITH PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

CONFUSION SUSPICION

Take them seriously.
Validate their experience
and feelings.
Join their reality.

VISION

Approach from the front,
place self and things that
need noticed in the center
of their visual field.
Assess the environment.

SLOWED RESPONSE

PAUSE!
Wait at least 10 seconds
for a response.
Gesture.
Simplify.

TOOLS FOR YOUR INTERACTIONS WITH PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

WANDERING

Identify unmet needs or feelings.

AGGRESSION

Identify unmet needs.
Eliminate the “threat”.
Take their side.

REPETITION

Be patient.
Use writing and gestures
to aid communication.

BEST PRACTICES FOR MEANINGFUL INTERACTIONS & COMMUNICATION



**TALK WITH THE
PERSON**



**HAVE A CURIOUS
MIND
GET TO KNOW THE
PERSON**



**BE FLEXIBLE
BE CREATIVE
YES...AND**



**HAVE PATIENCE
BE CALM &
SUPPORTIVE**

SCENARIOS



<https://beinginthemoment.org/know-how/workbench-arguing/>

SCENARIOS



<https://beinginthemoment.org/know-how/workbench-going-with-the-flow/>

SCENARIOS



<https://beinginthemoment.org/know-how/pills-already-took-them/>



MEADOWLARK
Special Programs

MEMORY PROGRAM



PARKINSON'S PROGRAM

ENGAGEMENT



EDUCATION

EXERCISE



OUTREACH

THANK YOU

Alzheimer's Association
Margaret Haden

Meadowlark Special Programs – 785-323-3899
Michelle Haub – mhaub@meadowlark.org
Katie Sigman – ksigman@meadowlark.org



Person-Centered Care Conference
October 15, 2025

WALK TO END ALZHEIMER'S

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION®

Held annually in more than 600 communities nationwide, the **Alzheimer's Association Walk to End Alzheimer's®** is the world's largest fundraiser for Alzheimer's care, support and research.

www.alzwalkmanhattan.org





Thank *you!*

Please scan the QR code or visit alz.org/hello to record your attendance and let us know if you'd like to learn more.



**Thank you for joining
today's Alzheimer's
Association presentation.**

Please scan the QR code or visit
alz.org/hello to record your
attendance and let us know if
you'd like to learn more.





Protect your head



Challenge your mind



Stay in school



Be smoke-free



Eat right



Control your blood pressure



Manage diabetes



Get moving



Sleep well



Maintain a health

**10
HEALTHY
HABITS
FOR YOUR
BRAIN**

Learn more at
alz.org/healthyhabits



24/7 Helpline



The Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline (800.272.3900) is a free service offering confidential information and support for people living with dementia, caregivers, families and the public.



Free Education and Support

The Association offers robust information, education and support both in person and online, and helps to connect individuals with resources in the community.

TrialMatch®

The Association connects individuals living with cognitive impairment, Alzheimer's disease or another dementia, caregivers and healthy participants with current research studies. This free, easy-to-use service helps you find clinical research that may be a good fit.





Join Us!

- ✓ Share your personal story as an advocate.
- ✓ Help your neighbors by providing education or a support group.
- ✓ Get involved in clinical trials or a research study.
- ✓ Fight Alzheimer's through a fundraising activity of your choice on a day that works for you.
- ✓ Visit [alz.org](https://www.alz.org) or call our helpline to learn more.

Do What You Love to End ALZ makes it easy to make a difference. It's simple, flexible and starts with you — doing something you love and turning it into a fundraiser to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia.

There's no limit to what you can do!

From hiking, golfing, gaming, or crafting, to playing pickleball or bridge, hosting a cookout or purple party — choose your passion, add the power of your community, and get started.

DO WHAT YOU LOVE TO END ALZ™

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION®

alz.org/dowhatyoulove

