

## Tipsheet: Alzheimer's Disease

Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia, affecting as many as four million Americans and is the fourth leading cause of death in adults—after heart disease, cancer and stroke. It is a progressive, degenerative disease that attacks the brain. Similar to a watch that no longer keeps correct time, the brain damage caused by Alzheimer's disease can result in impaired memory, thinking, and behavior.

### Alzheimer's Disease Symptoms

If someone you know has several of these symptoms, encourage him/her to see a physician for a complete examination.

- **Increasing memory loss**  
Forgetting things more often and not remembering them later.
- **Difficulty performing familiar tasks**  
Such as preparing a meal and not only forgetting to serve it, but forgetting you made it.
- **Language problems**  
Forgetting words, using inappropriate words or incomprehensible sentences.
- **Disorientation of time and place**  
Getting lost on your own street and not knowing how to return home.
- **Poor or decreased judgment**  
Not remembering regular responsibilities (such as a child in your care) or dressing inappropriately (wearing several shirts.)
- **Problems with abstract thinking**  
Such as forgetting what numbers are and how you use them.
- **Misplacing things**  
Putting things in inappropriate places, such as an iron in the freezer.
- **Rapid mood or behavior changes**  
From calm to tears to anger, for no apparent reason.
- **Personality changes**  
Becoming extremely confused, suspicious, or fearful.
- **Loss of initiative**  
Becoming very passive, requiring prompting to stay involved in conversations, etc.

**Source:** Alzheimer's Association Minnesota – North Dakota Chapter, [www.alzmdak.org](http://www.alzmdak.org), Information Helpline: 1-800-232-0851.

### Resources & More Information

Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral Center: [www.alzheimers.nia.nih.gov](http://www.alzheimers.nia.nih.gov)

P.O. Box 8250  
Silver Spring, MD 20907-8250  
1-800-438-4380

Eldercare Locator: [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov)  
1-800-677-1116

National Alzheimer's Association: [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)  
225 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 1700  
Chicago, IL 60611-7633  
1-800-272-3900

National Institute on Aging: [www.nia.nih.gov/Alzheimers/Publications/adfact.htm](http://www.nia.nih.gov/Alzheimers/Publications/adfact.htm)

United Way 2-1-1™, a free and confidential 24/7 helpline that can connect you to over 40,000 community resources. Just dial 2-1-1 or 651-291-0211.