10 early warning signs

A Izheimer's is a brain disease that causes a slow decline in memory, thinking and reasoning skills. There are 10 warning signs and symptoms. If you notice any of them, don't ignore them. Schedule an appointment with your doctor.

1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life: Forgetting recently learned information, important dates or events. Asking for the same information over and over and increasingly having to rely on memory aids (reminder notes, etc.).

What is a typical age-related change? Sometimes forgetting names or appointments, but remembering them later.

2. Challenges in planning or solving problems: Changes in the ability to develop and follow a plan or work with numbers. Difficulty concentrating, and taking longer to do things than before.

What's a typical age-related change? Making occasional errors when balancing a checkbook.

3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks: Sometimes people with Alzheimer's may have trouble driving to a familiar location, managing a budget at work or remembering the rules of a familiar game.

What is a typical age-related change? Needing help to use the settings on a microwave or record a TV show.

4. Confusion with time or place:

People with Alzheimer's can lose track of dates, seasons and the passage of time. Sometimes they may forget where they are and how they got there.

What is a typical age-related change? Getting confused about the day of the week but figuring it out later.

5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships: Some people with Alzheimer's may have difficulty reading, judging distance and determining color or contrast, which may cause problems with driving.

What is a typical age-related change? Vision changes related to cataracts.

6. New problems with words in speaking or writing: People with Alzheimer's may may repeat themselves, struggle with vocabulary, have trouble finding the right word, or call things by the wrong name.

What is a typical age-related change? Sometimes having trouble finding the right word.

7. Misplacing things and inability to retrace steps: People with Alzheimer's may put things in unusual places, lose things, and be unable to go back over their steps to find them again.

What is a typical age-related change? Misplacing things from time to time and retracing steps to find them.

8. Decreased or poor judgment: People with Alzheimer's may experience changes in judgment or decision-making (e.g., giving large amounts to telemarketers). They may pay less attention to grooming or keeping themselves clean.

What is a typical age-related change? Making a bad decision once in a while.

9. Withdrawal from work or social activities: People with Alzheimer's may start to remove themselves from hobbies, social activities, work projects or sports.

What is a typical age-related change? Sometimes feeling weary of work, family and social obligations.

10. Changes in mood and personality:

People with Alzheimer's can become confused, suspicious, depressed, fearful or anxious. They may be easily upset at home, at work, with friends, or in places where they are out of their comfort zone.

What is a typical age-related change? Developing very specific ways of doing things and becoming irritable when a routine is disrupted.

-ROBERT SPEER



