

My memory is going ... it must be Alzheimer's



“I think I’m losing my mind!” That’s a common phrase we often say in this 24/7 stressful world of ours. But when we start forgetting where we left our keys, our reading glasses or where we hide something (of course for safe keeping), **we might fearfully suspect our failing memory is a sign that Alzheimer’s is setting in.**

Memory Failings

Before jumping to any conclusions, it is important to know that memory failings by themselves are not evidence of Alzheimer’s. There are other possible explanations including –

- Side effect of medications
- Emotional distress due to physical loss or changes in lifestyle
- Clinical depression
- Long-term stress or trauma events
- Excessive alcohol consumption
- Nutritional deficiencies
- Hardening of the arteries
- Thyroid conditions
- Audio or visual problems affecting processing of information
- Poor quality sleep; lack of sufficient sleep

While the possibility of dementia increases with aging, other debilitations appear along with a decline in memory. They may include problems communicating, maintaining attention span, being able to problem solve or issues with reasoning and judgment.

Related **conditions that exacerbate dementia** by interfering with smooth blood flow within the brain are

- high blood pressure
- high cholesterol
- diabetes
- stroke

When Does It Become a Memory Problem?

What distinguishes Alzheimer's is that it's a debilitation brain disease that occurs in 60% to 80% of the dementia population.

The Alzheimer's Association identifies **10 warning signs** to watch for and they include –

1. Memory changes
2. Challenges in planning or solving problems
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks

4. Confusion with time and place
5. Trouble with visual images and spatial relationships
6. New problems with speech or writing
7. Misplacing things and unable to retrace steps
8. Decreased and poor judgment
9. Withdrawal from work or social activities
10. Changes in mood and personality

You can click on their **warning signs checklist** at http://www.alz.org/national/documents/checklist_10signs.pdf

A good **understanding of the stages of Alzheimer's** can be found at <http://www.alzinfo.org/clinical-stages-of-alzheimers> from theFisherCenter for Alzheimer's Research Foundation

No one wants to dwell on the possibility of developing Alzheimer's but the projected increase to 8 million women with Alzheimer's by 2050 is a reality we all need to face. After all, time flies by quicker than we care to think.

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