

Ten Warning Signs of Alzheimer's Disease

1. Recent memory loss that affects your job skills

It is normal to occasionally forget an assignment, deadline, or friend's name, but frequent forgetfulness or unexplainable confusion at home or in the workplace may signal problems.

2. Difficulty performing familiar tasks

Busy people frequently get distracted. For example, you might leave something on the stove too long or not remember to serve part of a meal. People with AD might prepare a meal and not only forget to serve it, but forget they made it.

3. Problems with language

Everyone has trouble finding the right word sometimes, but a person with AD may forget simple words or substitute inappropriate words, making his or her sentences difficult to understand.

4. Disorientation of time and place

It is normal to momentarily forget the day of the week or what you need from the store. But people with AD can become lost on their own street, not knowing where they are, how they got there, or how to get home.

5. Poor or decreased judgment

Choosing not to bring a sweater or coat along on a chilly night is a common mistake. A person with AD, however, may dress inappropriately in more noticeable ways, wearing a bathrobe to the store or several blouses on a hot day.

6. Problems with abstract thinking

Balancing a checkbook can be challenging for many people, but for someone with AD, recognizing numbers or performing basic calculations may be impossible.

7. Misplacing things

Everyone temporarily misplaces a wallet or keys from time to time. A person with AD may put these and other items in inappropriate places, such as an iron in the freezer, or a wristwatch in the sugar bowl, then not recall how they got there.

8. Changes in mood or behavior

Everyone experiences a broad range of emotions; it is part of being human. People with AD tend to exhibit more rapid mood swings for no apparent reason.

9. Changes in personality

People's personalities may change somewhat as they age. But a person with AD can change dramatically, either suddenly or over a period of time. Someone who is generally easy going may become angry, suspicious, or fearful.

10. Loss of initiative

It is normal to tire of housework, business activities, or social obligations, but most people retain or eventually regain their interest. The person with AD may remain disinterested and uninvolved in many or all of her usual pursuits.