

# Top 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's

**When you forget where you put your keys or misplaced your eyeglasses (again), you may joke about having Alzheimer's. But it's no laughing matter. And while forgetting your keys can be just a normal part of aging, memory loss that is so intense it disrupts your daily life is a warning sign of something far more ominous.**

Alzheimer's disease is a fatal brain disease that causes a slow decline in memory, thinking and reasoning skills. According to the Alzheimer's Association, these are the 10 warning signs of Alzheimer's. If you or a loved one experience one or more, it's time to stop joking and make a doctor's appointment.

## Top 10 warning signs of Alzheimer's:

### 1. Memory changes that disrupt daily life

In the early stages of Alzheimer's, it's common to forget recently learned information, as well as important dates or events. One signal is asking for the same information repeatedly and relying on family members or reminder notes for things that were once routinely remembered.

**What's typical?** Sometimes forgetting names or appointments, but remembering them later.

### 2. Challenges in planning or solving problems

Some people may experience changes in their ability to develop and follow a plan or work with numbers. For example, they may have trouble following a familiar recipe or keeping track of monthly bills. Sometimes, they cannot concentrate and take far longer to do things than they did before.

**What's typical?** Making occasional errors when balancing a checkbook.

### 3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work or at leisure

People who have Alzheimer's find it difficult to complete daily tasks. For example, they may have trouble driving to a familiar location, managing a budget at work or remembering the rules of a favorite game.

**What's typical?** Occasionally needing help to use the settings on a microwave or to record a television show.

### 4. Confusion with time or place

People with Alzheimer's can lose track of dates, seasons and the passage of time. They may have trouble understanding something if it is not happening immediately. Sometimes they may forget where they are or how they got there.

**What's typical?** Getting confused about the day of the week but figuring it out later.

### **5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships**

Difficulty reading, judging distance and determining color or contrast are vision problems that can be a sign of Alzheimer's disease.

**What's typical?** Vision changes related to cataracts.

### **6. New problems with words in speaking or writing**

When people have trouble following or joining in a conversation, it could be a sign of Alzheimer's, as well as stopping in the middle of conversing, having no idea how to continue or repeating themselves. Vocabulary struggles are common, including calling everyday items by the wrong name. Example: calling a "watch" an "arm-clock."

**What's typical?** Sometimes having trouble finding the right word.

### **7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps**

People who have Alzheimer's may put things in unusual places or lose things and then be unable to go back over their steps to find them again. Sometimes, they may accuse others of stealing. This may occur more frequently over time.

**What's typical?** Misplacing things from time to time, such as a pair of glasses or the remote control.

### **8. Decreased or poor judgment**

Alzheimer's can cause changes in judgment or decision-making, including poor judgment when dealing with money. People with the disease may pay less attention to their grooming or keeping themselves clean.

**What's typical?** Making a bad decision once in a while.

### **9. Withdrawal from work or social activities**

It's common for those with Alzheimer's to remove themselves from hobbies, social activities, work projects or sports. They may have trouble keeping up with a favorite sports team or remembering how to complete a favorite hobby. They may also avoid being social because of the changes they have experienced.

**What's typical?** Sometimes feeling weary of work, family and social obligations.

### **10. Changes in mood and personality**

The mood and personalities of people with Alzheimer's can change. They 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's typical?** Developing very specific ways of doing things and becoming irritable when a routine is disrupted.