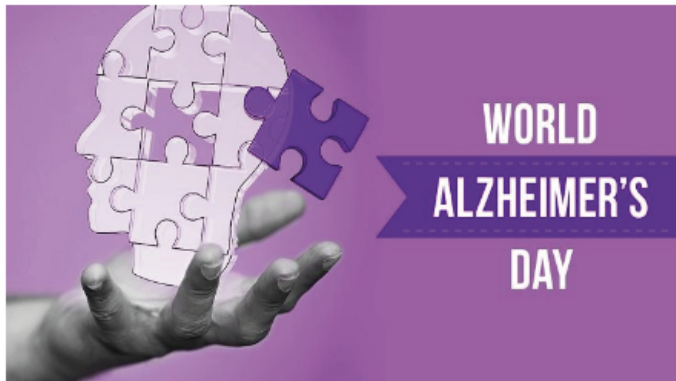


World Alzheimer's Day



Every year, on the 21st of September, World Alzheimer's Day helps to promote public awareness of Alzheimer's disease and challenges the stigma surrounding the condition.

The theme for this year's campaign, 'Know Dementia, Know Alzheimer's,' continues from the 2021 campaign, which focused on the diagnosis and warning signs of dementia, along with the impact that COVID-19 continues to have on the global dementia community.

Dementia is one of the biggest challenges facing communities across the world, affecting around 50 million people worldwide. Collaboration and sharing of best practices are essential in order to tackle the global dementia challenge.

What is Alzheimer's Disease?

Alzheimer's is the most common type of dementia, a progressive neurological disorder that causes the brain to shrink. It includes the part of the brain that controls thought, language and memory. Early symptoms include mild loss of memory, which progresses to a loss of ability to interact with the environment and carry out daily activities.

Scientists believe that a combination of genetics, lifestyle and environmental factors might be the cause of the disease. It tends to develop slowly and worsen over the years.

Alzheimer's disease is a brain disorder that slowly destroys memory and thinking skills, and eventually the ability to perform even the simplest tasks.



Warning signs of Alzheimer's Disease

People who are developing Alzheimer's Disease may exhibit the following traits:

- Loss of memory and disturbance of daily life, such as repeated questions or failure to recognize familiar places.
- Misplace things and are unable to find them.
- Difficulty completing daily tasks. This can include unusual behaviours, for example, placing car keys in a dryer, or putting a wallet or handbag in the fridge.
- Pay less attention to hygiene.
- Decreasing levels of judgment: For example, they may use poor judgment when dealing with money.
- Withdrawal from work and social activities.
- Change in mood: Being fearful and getting upset easily.

By understanding the stages of Alzheimer's Disease, you can provide support to your loved one

Alzheimer's Disease is divided into seven stages, according to research



Stage 1: Normal outward behaviour; it begins long before any symptoms appear, or anyone noticed that there is a problem.

Stage 2: Very mild changes, such as missing words, or misplacing things.

Stage 3: Mild decline; having memory delays for easily remembered information. This can include asking the same question more than once.

Stage 4: Moderate decline; the problem gets more obvious and new issues are noticed such as forgetting details about themselves and being unable to understand what is being said to them.

Stage 5: Moderately severe decline; start losing track of where they are and what time it is. They may also be unable to remember their home address or phone number.

Stage 6: Severe decline; individuals become more confused and forgetful. They face difficulty in remembering names but can recognize faces. They will need more help with daily activities and self-care.

Stage 7: Very severe decline; many daily activities, such as eating and walking, decline during this stage. The patient will need a lot of help and care from a caregiver or a special medical facility.



Treatment and Care

There is no cure for Alzheimer's, however much can be offered to improve and support the lives of individuals with Alzheimer's, such as:

- **Music therapy:** Helps to activate memories and reconnect with the world around them.
- **Art therapy:** Such as painting and drawing, can help them express themselves.
- **Pet therapy:** Animals could help people with dementia by providing companionship and support in daily activities that might improve physical and mental health, including better mood.
- **Massage:** It eases agitation and improves sleep.
- **Taking supplements:** Such as omega-3 fatty acids.
- **Focus on previous hobbies.**
- **Occupational therapy:** A therapist will evaluate the patient's strengths and weaknesses, and their ability to understand, and work with them to improve their physical skills.



Reducing the risk of Alzheimer's Disease:

Research has noted that there is a link between cardiovascular disease and an increased risk of Alzheimer's Disease and vascular dementia. You can reduce your risk of developing Alzheimer's Disease by:

- Eating healthy and balanced meals, that include 5 portions of fruit and vegetables each day.
- Exercise by doing moderate-intensity activity for at least 150 minutes every week.
- Ensure regular check of your blood pressure during health check-ups and keep it at a normal level.
- Ensure regular taking of your medicine if you had a chronic condition such as diabetes.
- Quit smoking.
- Stay mentally and socially active by reading, trying a new hobby or activity, and learning a new language. You could even try some brain training activities that improve cognition over a short period such as computer games.

A simple diet that could reduce Alzheimer's risk:

Mediterranean-DASH diet, or MIND, is an intervention for neurodegenerative delays. This diet focuses on natural plant-based foods while limiting red meat, saturated fat, and sweets. Studies suggest that diet can reduce the risk of developing Alzheimer's Disease by up to 53%.

