



HEALTH AWARENESS

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ALZHEIMER'S AND BRAIN HEALTH

Alzheimer's disease, a progressive neurological disorder, affects millions of people worldwide, leading to memory loss, cognitive decline, and, ultimately, loss of independence. While there is currently no cure for Alzheimer's, research has shown that specific lifestyle changes and preventive measures can significantly boost brain health and potentially reduce the risk of developing this debilitating condition.

UNDERSTANDING ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Alzheimer's disease is characterized by the accumulation of amyloid plaques and tau tangles in the brain. These plaques disrupt communication between neurons and ultimately lead to cell death. This results in progressive memory loss, impaired thinking, and changes in behavior. The exact cause of Alzheimer's is still unknown, but a combination of genetic, environmental, and lifestyle factors is believed to contribute to its development. To diagnose Alzheimer's, physicians may use medical history, mental status tests, physical and neurological exams, diagnostic tests, and brain imaging.

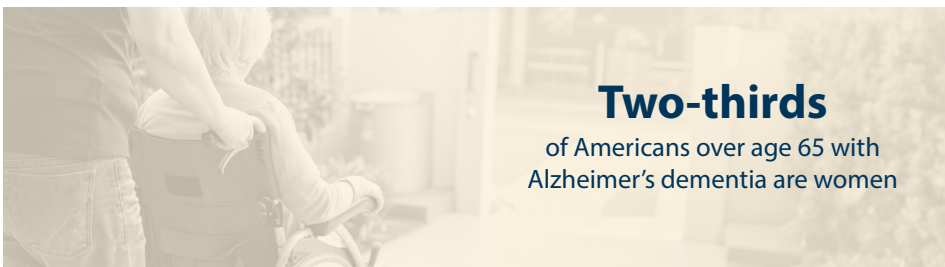
The most common [early symptom of Alzheimer's](#) is trouble remembering new information because the disease typically impacts the part of the brain associated with learning first. As Alzheimer's advances, symptoms get more severe and include disorientation, confusion, and behavior changes. Eventually, speaking, swallowing, and walking become difficult.

Though the most significant known risk factor for Alzheimer's is increasing age, the disease is not a normal part of aging. And though most people with Alzheimer's are 65 and older, approximately 200,000 Americans under 65 are living with [younger-onset Alzheimer's disease](#).

COMMON SYMPTOMS

Everyone has memory lapses at times, but the memory loss associated with Alzheimer's disease persists and gets worse. People with Alzheimer's disease may:

- Repeat statements and questions over and over.
- Forget conversations, appointments, or events.
- Misplace items, often putting them in places that don't make sense.
- Get lost in places they used to know well.
- Eventually forget the names of family members and everyday objects.
- Have trouble finding the right words for objects, expressing thoughts, or participating in conversations.



Two-thirds
of Americans over age 65 with
Alzheimer's dementia are women



1 in 3
seniors dies with Alzheimer's or
another dementia



Nearly

7

Million

Americans are living
with Alzheimer's

Brain changes that occur in Alzheimer's disease can affect personality, moods, and behaviors. Problems may include the following:

- Depression.
- Loss of interest in activities.
- Social withdrawal.
- Mood swings.
- Distrust in others.
- Anger or aggression.
- Changes in sleeping habits.
- Wandering.
- Loss of inhibitions.
- Delusions, such as believing something has been stolen.

KEY STRATEGIES FOR BOOSTING BRAIN HEALTH

Regular Physical Activity

Regular physical exercise is one of the most effective ways to enhance brain health. Activities such as walking, jogging, swimming, and cycling increase blood flow to the brain, promote the growth of new neurons, and reduce inflammation. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week.

Healthy Diet

A balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats can support brain health. The Mediterranean diet, which emphasizes fish, olive oil, nuts, and fresh produce, has been linked to a lower risk of cognitive decline. Foods rich in antioxidants, such as berries and leafy greens, help combat oxidative stress and inflammation.

Mental Stimulation

Keeping the brain active and engaged through lifelong learning, puzzles, reading, and other cognitive activities can strengthen neural connections and improve cognitive reserve. Challenging the brain with new skills or hobbies can also be beneficial.

Social Engagement

Maintaining strong social connections and engaging in regular social activities can protect against cognitive decline. Social interaction stimulates brain regions involved in memory and decision-making, reducing the risk of Alzheimer's.

Quality Sleep

Sleep is essential for brain health, allowing the brain to clear out toxins and consolidate memories. Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep per night. Establishing a regular sleep schedule and creating a restful environment can improve sleep quality.

Stress Management

Chronic stress can negatively impact brain health and increase the risk of Alzheimer's. Techniques such as mindfulness meditation, yoga, deep breathing exercises, and spending time in nature can help manage stress and promote overall well-being.

Regular Health Check-Ups

Monitoring and managing chronic conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, and high cholesterol are crucial for brain health. Regular check-ups with healthcare providers can help detect and treat these conditions early, reducing the risk of cognitive decline.



BENEFITS CORNER

As a member of CHP, you have access to many educational resources through CTSI's ASO agreement with Anthem.

Questions about Medicare? Anthem is there to help.

Move to Medicare is a free program for employees. Ease any burden by allowing the Anthem team to answer questions and provide the tools that make moving to Medicare easy.



Explore Your Options

Anthem offers Medicare Advantage and Medicare Supplement plans with the coverage and benefits you want. Visit shop.anthem.com/medicare.



Understand Eligibility and Enrollment

Most people qualify for Original Medicare (Parts A and B) when they turn 65. But other factors can affect your eligibility and enrollment, like whether you're retired or still working, and whether or not you're receiving Social Security benefits. To learn more, visit anthem.com/medicareturning-65.



Employee Toolkits

Anthem provides helpful FAQ documents and fliers to upload to your employee portals or post in breakrooms. The popular Anthem Medicare 101 video recording can also be viewed at any time.



For questions, contact Anthem's CTSI Medicare Specialist

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