

What Is Alzheimer’s Disease?

Alzheimer’s is a brain disease that affects a person’s ability to remember, reason, and communicate. Alzheimer’s is the most common cause of **dementia**, a general term for memory loss and loss of other intellectual abilities that interfere with daily activities. Dementia used to be known as “senility” and was thought to be a normal sign of getting older. But now we know that Alzheimer’s and other forms of dementia are *not* a normal part of aging.

How Is It Diagnosed?

Alzheimer’s is suspected when symptoms of dementia, such as memory loss and confusion, are present. Other conditions that cause the same symptoms must then be ruled out. These include thyroid problems, medication side effects, stroke, and depression. The evaluation for Alzheimer’s should always include a thorough history and physical and usually includes a memory test, blood tests, and a brain scan.



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