

# Stages of Alzheimer's Disease

Alzheimer's is a progressive disease that has several distinct stages. These range from early stages, which may show only mild or even no symptoms, to more advanced stages that are more severe. How fast these stages progress and which symptoms develop vary from person to person. Recognizing and understanding the symptoms of each stage can help you navigate changes as they occur.

## You Can Take Action

**Learning to identify these different stages of Alzheimer's in advance can give you the time and knowledge to make thoughtful choices about your future plans:<sup>1,2,3</sup>**

**Mild cognitive impairment.** Mild cognitive impairment (MCI) is a condition that often causes memory problems like forgetting appointments or recent events, losing objects and struggling to remember words, but it can also affect judgement, movement and smell. People with MCI will experience these problems more often than is normal for people their age. MCI leads to Alzheimer's disease in about 80% of cases.<sup>1</sup>

**Mild stage.** In this stage of Alzheimer's, people will experience symptoms that affect day-to-day life. They will still be able to perform most activities without much help but may be prone to repeating the same questions. It might take them longer to do things they know, like cooking, shopping or paying the bills. It's not uncommon for people in this stage to have trouble learning new information, solving problems or making plans and decisions.

**Moderate stage.** As the disease progresses, people with Alzheimer's will start to need more help with daily activities and might get confused about where they are, what day or year it is, and may have trouble recognizing their friends and family. They may also

become angry, frustrated, sad, suspicious, or easily upset. In this stage, people with Alzheimer's may be prone to wandering and have trouble sleeping. Over time, they may need help getting dressed, bathing, and going to the bathroom.

**Severe stage.** In the severe stage, people will need help with all activities of everyday life. They may not be aware of where they are or who they are with. It's common to have trouble walking, eating, using the toilet or sitting up by themselves.

**Very severe stage.** People in the very severe stage of Alzheimer's require continuous care. They may have trouble speaking, swallowing, and using the toilet. This may lead to other conditions, like skin infections, dehydration, or pneumonia and patients may eventually need hospice care.

1. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/11825-stages-of-alzheimers-disease>
2. <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-dementia/symptoms-diagnosis/how-dementia-progresses/early-stages-dementia>
3. <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-dementia/symptoms-and-diagnosis/how-dementia-progresses/symptoms-memory>
4. <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/what-mild-cognitive-impairment>