



World Alzheimer's Day 2025: #AskAboutDementia

Awareness, Understanding, Action



This World Alzheimer's Day, #AskAboutDementia.

World Alzheimer's Day on September 21 is a global effort to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and support those affected. While new treatments can slow early-stage Alzheimer's, there is still much work to do, and families continue to face daily challenges. By sharing information, talking to loved ones, or supporting research and care initiatives, everyone can help make a difference.

DID YOU KNOW?

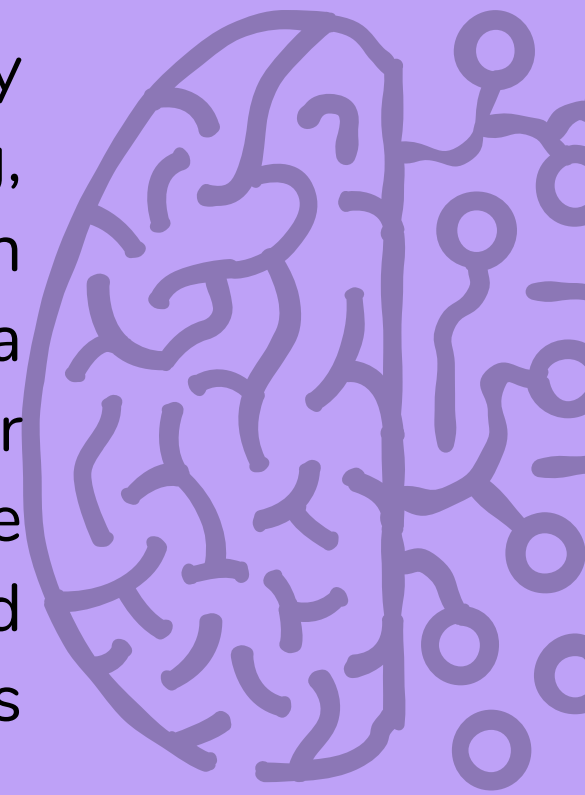
- Alzheimer's Disease (AD) is the most common form of dementia.
- AD is thought to first emerge 20+ years with brain damage occurring before symptoms such as memory loss develop.
- AD is biologically based definition with core biomarkers.
- 352,000 South Africans aged 60+ estimated to be living with dementia, of which 60-80% of cases are Alzheimer's.
- Dementia cases are expected to double by 2050 with ageing population.
- Many remain undiagnosed, especially in rural areas due to stigma and lack of access to resources and knowledge.
- Families shoulder most costs of care since access to specialised facilities and private caretakers are limited.

*Every question matters.
Every memory matters.
#AskAboutDementia*

Creating Awareness:

What is Alzheimer's?

Alzheimer's occurs when brain neurons, especially those controlling memory, language, and thinking, are damaged and destroyed resulting in brain shrinkage. Early AD becomes apparent when a victim of the disease begins to forget familiar words, misplaces objects, and starts to struggle with organising, planning, socialising, and performing work tasks. Family and close friends may begin to notice these symptoms.



In 2024, revised diagnostic criteria were published:

- Stage 0: asymptomatic, biomarkers in normal range.
- Stage 1: asymptomatic, biomarker evidence present. Cognitive performance within expected range, no recent cognitive decline.
- Stage 2: transitional decline, mild changes but minimal impact on daily function. Subtle cognitive decline, onset of changes in mood, anxiety, and/or motivation (not explained by life events).
- Stage 3: cognitive impairment with early functional impact. Notable decline on cognitive tests. Still independent, but may be less efficient.
- Stage 4: dementia with mild functional impairment. Interdependence on tasks that may have safety risks (e.g., driving, cooking)
- Stage 5: dementia with moderate functional impairment. Require assistance with multi-step tasks such as dressing and bathing. Personality and behavioural changes are likely.
- Stage 6: dementia with severe functional impairment. Fully dependent on others. Diminished verbal communication, incontinence, loss of mobility.

*Raise awareness, reduce stigma,
#AskAboutDementia, and
support families affected by Alzheimer's.*

Alzheimer's Mythbusters: Facts vs Fiction

Is what I've heard about Alzheimer's true?



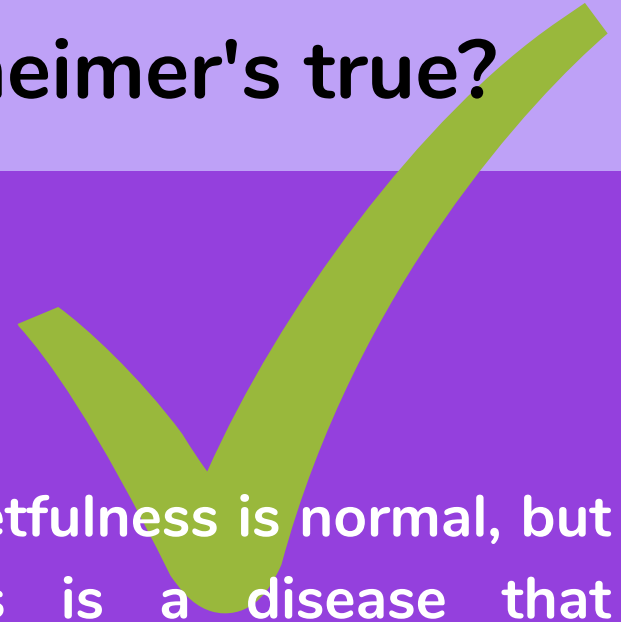
Memory loss is just part of normal ageing.

Alzheimer's only affects older people.

Nothing can be done about Alzheimer's.

Alzheimer's only affects memory.

Families must cope alone.



Some forgetfulness is normal, but Alzheimer's is a disease that disrupts daily life.

While risk increases with age, younger people can also develop other forms of dementia.

Early diagnosis, healthy lifestyle changes, and new treatments can slow progression of the disease.

It also impacts behaviour, emotions, problem-solving, and relationships.

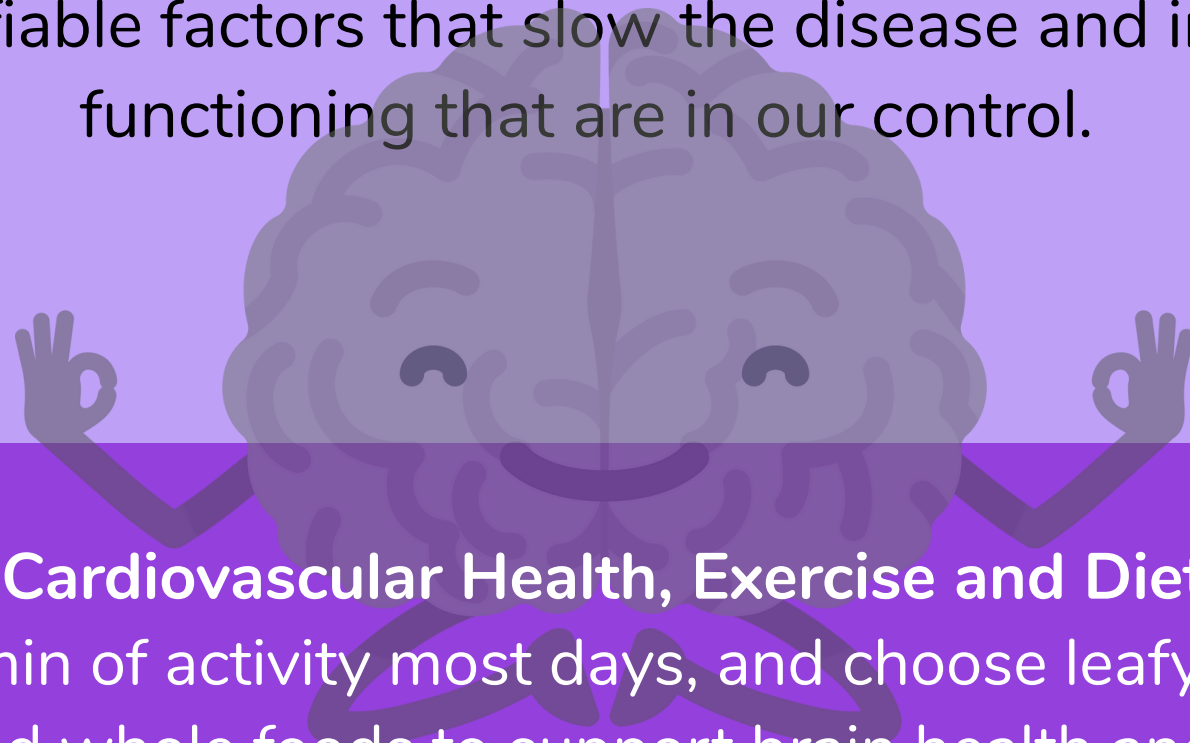
Support groups, healthcare services, and communities can help

*Stigma thrives on myths.
Let's challenge them together.
#AskAboutDementia*

Spring into Brain Health:

Habits for a Healthy Mind

The majority of people who develop Alzheimer's are 65+ years (late onset Alzheimer's dementia). While non-modifiable factors such as genetics and family history influence this development, there are other, modifiable factors that slow the disease and improve daily functioning that are in our control.



Cardiovascular Health, Exercise and Diet

Aim for 30 min of activity most days, and choose leafy greens, fish, nuts, and whole foods to support brain health and reduce neurodegenerative declines.

Brain Stimulation and Education

Read, learn a new skill, engage in a cognitively demanding hobby, or play strategy games to keep neurons firing and cognitive networks active.

Prioritise Sleep

7–9 hours of quality rest a night helps remove toxic substances from the brain.

Manage Stress

Spend time with friends, family, and community: good social connections lower your risk.

Also consider mindfulness, prayer, or relaxation practices.



IMPORTANT TAKEAWAYS

Getting a diagnosis of Alzheimer's can be emotionally difficult. Fear, denial, and anger are common.

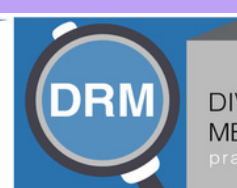
Support, and seeking professional assistance for the patient and caregivers is important to mitigate the progressive nature of the disease.

Caregivers of Alzheimer's patients may be susceptible to burnout and depression.

If there is a medical diagnosis of Alzheimer's, it may be important to get legal, financial, and to some extent, end-of-life plans in place.

Take action to form healthy habits today to protect your memory tomorrow.

#AskAboutDementia



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