



# Supporting **Brain Health** in Our Community

## Building **Healthy Brain** Habits





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# Agenda

- Alzheimer's facts & figures - the impact on our communities
- Take control of your brain health
- Early detection & treatment
- Q&A

## About the Alzheimer's Association

The Alzheimer's Association leads the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia — by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support.

Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's and all other dementia<sup>®</sup>.



## Cognitive Decline

Cognitive decline refers to changes in memory, thinking, and/or reasoning that are worsening over time.



## Dementia

An umbrella term for loss of memory and other thinking abilities **severe enough to interfere with daily life**. Dementia is NOT a normal part of aging.

Alzheimer's

Vascular

Lewy body

Frontotemporal

Other, including Huntington's

Mixed dementia: from more than one cause

# 2026 ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE FACTS AND FIGURES



**1 in 3** older adults  
dies with Alzheimer's  
or another dementia

Between 2000 and  
2024 deaths from heart  
disease have decreased **3.8%**



while deaths from  
Alzheimer's disease  
have increased over **134%**



It kills more than  
breast cancer and  
prostate cancer



**COMBINED**

NEARLY  
**13 MILLION**  
Americans provide  
unpaid care for people  
with Alzheimer's or  
other dementias



These caregivers  
provided more  
than 19 billion  
hours valued over  
**\$446 BILLION**



In 2026, Alzheimer's  
and other dementias  
will cost the nation

**\$409  
BILLION**

By 2050,  
these costs  
could rise  
to nearly

**\$1 TRILLION**



The lifetime  
risk for  
Alzheimer's  
at age 45 is

**1 in 5**  
for women

**1 in 10**  
for men

OVER  
**7 MILLION**

Americans  
are living  
with  
Alzheimer's



**3 out of 4**  
Americans say  
lifestyle behaviors  
are important  
for brain health,



but only  
**46%**  
strongly connect  
these behaviors to  
reducing dementia risk





## Cost of Unpaid Care

11 million  
Americans  
provided

18 billion  
hours of  
unpaid  
care

**\$339  
billion**



# Caregiving

## Who Are the Alzheimer's Caregivers?

- **Two thirds** are women and **one third** are daughters
- **One in three** is age 65 or older
- **More than half** take care of their parents
- One quarter of dementia caregivers are in “sandwich generation” of caregivers
- **41%** of caregivers have a household income of **\$50,000 or less**
- **66%** live with the care recipient in the community



## Women and Alzheimer's Disease



In the U.S., more than **10 million** women are either living with Alzheimer's or caring for someone who has it.



Over **60%** of Alzheimer's and dementia caregivers are women.



Almost **2/3** of Americans living with Alzheimer's are women.

# Black Americans and Alzheimer's Disease



Black Americans are about **2 times** as likely as White Americans to have Alzheimer's and other dementias, but they are less likely to receive a diagnosis.



**1/2** say that they have experienced discrimination while seeking care for a person living with Alzheimer's.



**Nearly 2/3** believe medical research is biased against people of color.



**Only 48% of Black Americans** report being confident they can access culturally competent care.



55% of Black Americans **think that significant loss of cognitive abilities or memory is a natural part of aging** rather than a disease.

**Only 35% of Black Americans** say that they are concerned about Alzheimer's or dementia.



Only 53% of Black Americans **believe that a cure for Alzheimer's will be distributed fairly**, without regard to race, color or ethnicity.

# Hispanic Americans and Alzheimer's Disease

Hispanic Americans are about **1.5 times** as likely as White Americans to have Alzheimer's and other dementias.



**57%** believe that a significant loss of memory or cognitive abilities is a “normal part of aging.”



**1 in 3** report that they have experienced discrimination when seeking health care.





# Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and Alzheimer's Disease



**46%** of Asian Americans say that they are concerned about developing Alzheimer's or dementia.



**56%** believe that significant loss of memory or cognitive abilities is a "normal part of aging."



**45%** believe medical research is biased against people of color.



## Hispanic, Black, and Asian American dementia caregivers indicate:



Greater care demands



Less use of outside help



Greater depression

**compared to White American caregivers.**

# Native Americans and Alzheimer's Disease

By 2060, the number of American Indian/Alaska Native individuals 65 and older living with dementia is projected to increase by **4 times**.



As many as **1 in 3**  
will develop Alzheimer's  
or another dementia.



**61%** say that  
affordability of  
care is a barrier.



Source: Racial and ethnic estimates of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias in the United States (2015–2060) in adults aged ≥65 years, "Alzheimer's & Dementia": The Journal of the Alzheimer's Association

# LGBTQ+ Americans and Alzheimer's Disease

LGBTQ+ older adults living with dementia are significantly more likely to live alone, not be partnered or married, not have children, and not have a caregiver.



They face unique challenges in accessing support:



**40%** report that their support networks have become smaller over time.



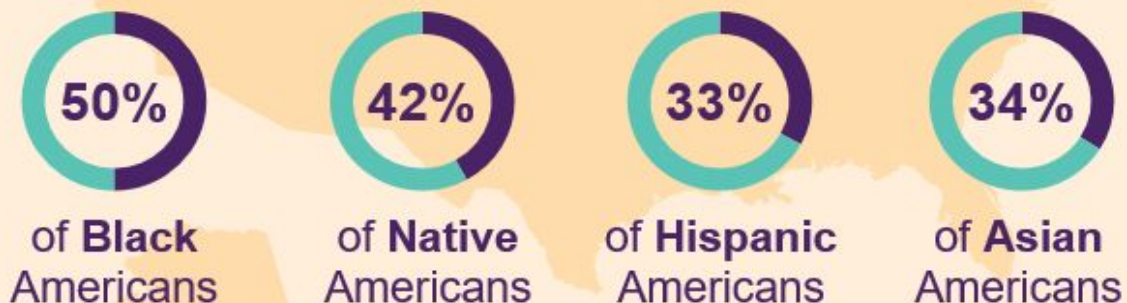
Up to **30%** experience lower rates of access to care.



## DISCRIMINATION

is a barrier to  
Alzheimer's and  
dementia care.

These populations  
reported  
discrimination when  
seeking health care:



# 2026

## ALZHEIMER'S STATISTICS NORTH CAROLINA



PREVALENCE

### 210,500

# of People Aged 65 and Older with Alzheimer's (2020)

### 11.6%

% of Adults Over 65 with Alzheimer's

# of Geriatricians in 2021

### 253

Increase Needed to Meet 2050 Demand

### 61.3%

# of Home Health and Personal Care Aides in 2022

### 62,750

Increase Needed to Meet 2032 Demand

### 23.3%

WORKFORCE

More than **7 million Americans** are living with Alzheimer's, and more than **12 million** provide their unpaid care. The cost of caring for

REGIVING

### 338,000

 # of Caregivers

### 446M

 Total Hours of Unpaid Care

### \$8.3B

 Total Value of Unpaid Care

### 50.7%

### 27.0%

### 17.0%

increasing to nearly **\$1 trillion** (in today's dollars) by mid-century.

For more information, view the *2026 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures* report at [alz.org/facts](http://alz.org/facts).

# of People in Hospice (2017) with a Primary Diagnosis of Dementia

**8,486**

Hospice Residents with a Primary Diagnosis of Dementia

**17.0%**

# of Emergency Department Visits per 1,000 People with Dementia (2018)

**1,684**

Dementia Patient Hospital Readmission Rate (2018)

**21.5%**

Medicaid Costs of Caring for People with Alzheimer's (2025)

**\$1.84B**

Per Capita Medicare Spending on People with Dementia in 2025 Dollars

**\$30,020**

HEALTH CARE

MORTALITY

**4,031** # of Deaths from Alzheimer's Disease (2024)  
**6th** leading cause of death







We all deserve a life with the healthiest brain possible.

We can all take actions to help protect our brain health.



# Risks to Brain Health

In most cases, Alzheimer's is the result of complex interactions across multiple factors.

## Non-modifiable

Ones we cannot change

- » Age
- » Genetics
- » Family history

## Modifiable

Ones we can change!

- » Certain health conditions
- » Health behaviors



# Take Charge of Your Brain Health



There are several risk factors for cognitive decline and dementia. Some, such as age, we can't control. But there are **actions we can take to improve our brain health.**



Growing evidence shows that **healthy living can lower the risk of cognitive decline and possibly dementia.**



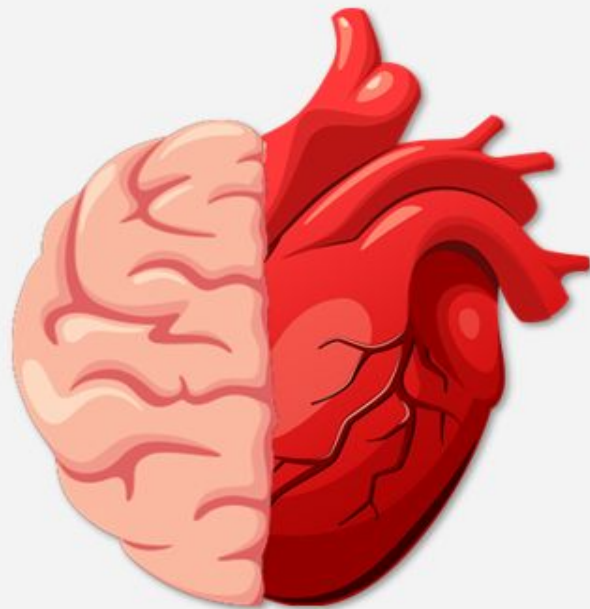
Our brains need to be taken care of at all ages. It is never **too early or too late** to take action to protect brain health.

# The brain-heart connection



Our hearts and brains are closely connected.

- The heart pumps blood to the brain.
- The blood provides oxygen and other nutrients to nourish the brain.
- **What's good for our hearts is good for our brains.**



# 10 HEALTHY HABITS FOR YOUR BRAIN



**Protect your head**



**Be smoke-free**



**Get moving**



**Challenge your mind**



**Control your blood pressure**



**Manage diabetes**



**Sleep well**



**Stay in school**



**Eat right**



**Maintain a healthy weight**



## Control Your Blood Pressure

Medications can help lower high blood pressure. And healthy habits like eating right and physical activity can help too. Work with a health care provider to control your blood pressure.

## Manage Diabetes

Type 2 diabetes can be prevented or controlled by healthier eating, increasing physical activity, and medication, if necessary.



## Get Moving

Engage in regular physical activity. This includes activities that raise your heart rate and increase blood flow to the brain and body. Find ways to build more movement into your day - walking, dancing, gardening - whatever works for you!



## Eat Right

Eating healthier foods can help reduce your risk of cognitive decline. This includes more vegetables and leaner meats/proteins, along with foods that are less processed and lower in fat. Choose healthier meals and snacks that you enjoy and are available to you.





## Maintain A Healthy Weight

Talk to your health care provider about the weight that is healthy for you. Other healthy habits on this list - eating right, physical activity and sleep - can help with maintaining a healthy weight.

## Sleep Well

Good quality sleep is important for brain health. Stay off screens before bed and make your sleep space as comfortable as possible. Do all you can to minimize disruptions. If you have any sleep-related problems, such as sleep apnea, talk to a health care provider.



## Be Smoke-Free

Quitting smoking can lower the risk of cognitive decline back to levels similar to those who have not smoked. It's never too late to stop.



## Protect Your Head

Help prevent an injury to your head. Wear a helmet for activities like biking, and wear a seatbelt. Protect yourself while playing sports. Do what you can to prevent falls, especially for older adults.





## Stay In School

Education reduces your risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Encourage youth to stay in school and pursue the highest level of training possible. Continue your own education by taking a class at a local library, college, or online.

## Challenge Your Mind

Be curious. Put your brain to work and do something that is new or hard for you. Learn a new skill. Try something artistic. Challenging your mind may have short- and long-term benefits for your brain.



Why these

# 10 HEALTHY HABITS FOR YOUR BRAIN



Currently, these risk factors have the strongest levels of evidence.

There may be other risks to brain health but the current body of science is lower or unclear. Exciting research is exploring many topics, including hearing and vision loss, stress, air pollution.

Learn more [alz.org/healthyhabits](https://alz.org/healthyhabits)



**U.S. POINTER**  
ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION®

The first large-scale, randomized controlled trial in the U.S. to evaluate whether addressing several lifestyle factors at the same time – diet, exercise, cognitive stimulation, and heart health – can protect cognitive function in older adults at increased risk for cognitive decline.

# THE U.S. POINTER BRAIN HEALTH RECIPE\*



\*Participants followed either a self-guided or structured lifestyle program. The two interventions both focused on the same lifestyle domains, but differed in structure, accountability and support provided.

# Get moving



**Aerobics, strength training and stretching are all part of a balanced exercise routine.**

**Aim for:**



**Aerobic exercise:**

30-35 minutes of moderate-to-intense aerobic activity four times a week



**Strength training:**

15-20 minutes, two times a week



**Stretching and balance exercises:**

10-15 minutes, two times a week

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# What's good for the heart is good for the brain

## Control Your Blood Pressure



Blood pressure should be less than 130/80 mmHG.

## Manage Diabetes



Healthy eating, exercise and medications can be effective in managing diabetes.

## Maintain a Healthy Weight



Talk with a health care provider about what is right for you.

## Be Smoke-Free



Quitting can be hard! 1-800-QUIT-NOW or local resources can help.



## The MIND diet provides optimal nutrition for brain health.



### Aim to regularly eat:

- Leafy Green Vegetables, 1 serving/day
- Other Vegetables, 1 serving/day
- Berries, 5 servings/week
- Whole Grains, 3 servings/day
- Poultry (white meat, skinless), 2 servings/week
- Fish (not fried), 1 serving/week
- Beans/Legumes, 3 servings/week
- Nuts, 5 servings/week
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil, 2 servings/day



### Limit:

- Red & Processed Meats
- Butter/Margarine
- Cheese
- Fried Foods
- Sweets

[alz.org/foodtracker](https://alz.org/foodtracker)

# Tips to eat right



Eat Right

Focus on adding more healthy foods. What can you add?



- Healthy afternoon snacks
- Vegetables on pasta or rice
- Fruit along with dessert

Find healthier foods you can swap in. What new foods are you willing to try?



- Olive oil
- Herbs
- Leaner meats
- Whole grains

# Sleep well



Sleep Well

**Quality sleep allows you to go through the sleep cycle, including deep sleep, and this is valuable for brain health.**



Adults should aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep.

# Tips to sleep well



Sleep Well



Avoid caffeine later in the day.



Be physically active during the day.



Minimize naps.



Keep a regular sleep schedule.



Cooler temperatures promote sleep.



Minimize noise.



Block light with black out curtains or masks.



Protect your sleep from disruptions.

# Keep your brain working hard



**Cognitive engagement builds new connections in our brains.**



- Learning builds up a “cognitive reserve”.
- The more years of formal education, the better.
- Cognitive engagement encourages bloodflow to the brain and more connections between brain cells.

# Tips to challenge your mind



Challenge Your  
Mind



Try strategy  
games



Do  
puzzles



Learn a  
language



Explore a new  
hobby

**Get out of your comfort zone and make your brain work hard.**

# Prevent head injuries



Protect  
Your Head

Head injuries, including concussions, can cause short- and long-term problems.



Make sure everyone in your vehicle is wearing a seatbelt.



Wear a helmet to minimize injuries while bike riding, skating, skiing, or similar activities.



Organize your space to minimize the risk of falling. Keep safety in mind for home projects.

# Other factors being studied



## Hearing and vision loss:

To date, some studies suggest that **hearing and/or vision loss may be associated with higher risk of dementia.**



## Air pollution:

Some studies show a **link between particulate matter in the air and possible increased risk of cognitive decline.**



## Alcohol abuse:

**Excessive use of alcohol over time can lead to memory issues** and possibly even to Korsakoff syndrome – a chronic memory disorder.



## Stress:

Short-term stress may affect our daily routines and brain-healthy habits. So, **managing stress could be important for brain health.**

# Brain Health Habit Builder



**Your brain health affects how you live now and can protect your memory and thinking for the future.**

Use this tool to check your current brain-healthy habits. Then use the results to create an action plan to take charge of your brain health.

[Get Started](#)

# Early Detection and Treatment



Early detection is important, **pay attention to any changes in memory, thinking or behavior** that you notice in yourself or someone else.

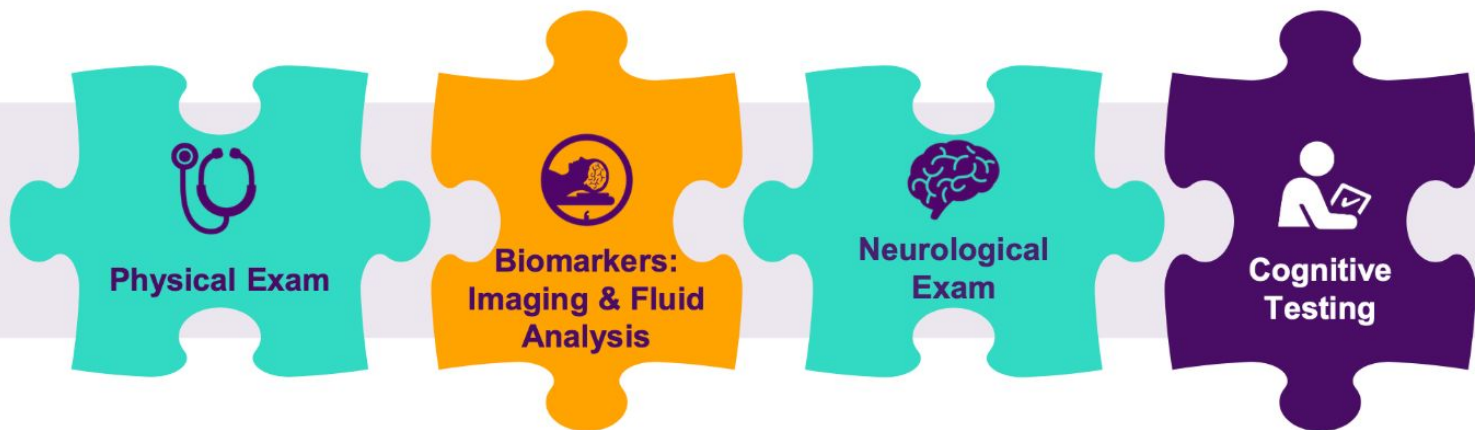


There are treatments that can change disease progression, and drug and non-drug options that may help treat symptoms. **Talk to your doctor to learn more about treatment options.**

# How is Alzheimer's Currently Diagnosed?

**There is no single test that can determine if a person is living with Alzheimer's disease or another dementia.**

Doctors use a combination of diagnostic tools combined with medical history to make an accurate diagnosis.



# FDA-Approved Therapies for Alzheimer's

**Treat Symptoms:**  
Cognition and Function

**Treat Symptoms:**  
Mood or Behavior

**Slow Disease Progression:**  
Cognition, Function and  
Behavior

First  
description  
of disease  
1906

		Asymptomatic	MCI	Mild Dementia	Moderate Dementia	Severe Dementia
1996	donepezil (Aricept)					
2000	rivastigmine (Exelon)					
2001	galantamine (Razadyne)					
2003	memantine (Namenda)					
2014	memantine + donepezil (Namzaric)					
2020	suvorexant* (Belsomra)					
2023	lecanemab (Leqembi)					
2023	brexpiprazole (Rexulti)					
2024	donanemab (Kisunla)					
2024	benzgalantamine (Zunveyl)					

# NEW!

On April 30, the FDA approved Auvelity for the treatment of agitation associated with Alzheimer's disease. For the first time, people living with Alzheimer's disease agitation have a treatment option that is not an antipsychotic — and that matters.

Until recently, people living with Alzheimer's disease had only one FDA-approved medication with a primary indication for agitation.

Auvelity expands those options with a new type of treatment that addresses longstanding concerns about the safety and tolerability of antipsychotics in this population — giving clinicians and families more tools to address one of the disease's most challenging symptoms.

Auvelity works differently. It is not an antipsychotic. In studies, it helped people keep their agitation under control and lowered the chances that symptoms would come back.

## Anti-Amyloid Monoclonal Antibodies



First treatments to address the underlying biology of Alzheimer's disease  
(Not a cure)



Targets and reduces amyloid plaques in the brains of individuals living with Alzheimer's disease

## Treatment May be Appropriate for People With Both:



Mild cognitive impairment (MCI) due to Alzheimer's disease or mild dementia due to Alzheimer's disease



Evidence of a buildup of amyloid plaques in the brain

# Ideal Patient Journey from Awareness of Cognitive Issues to Treatment

## Memory Concerns



A person notices some changes to their memory and thinking and has some concerns

## Conversation with PCP



Discusses with PCP who assesses medical history, conducts physical and cognitive tests as well as lab tests

## Referral to Specialist



Suggestion of MCI on tests leads to referral to a dementia specialist who conducts further evaluations

## Biomarker Testing



Diagnostic biomarker testing and brain imaging are recommended after MCI confirmation

## Treatment Discussion



Treatment options are discussed if beta-amyloid is confirmed by biomarker testing

## Scheduled Treatments



After treatment initiation, person is put on a schedule and monitored for side effects and benefits

# How to Access Treatment

- Talk to your doctor to determine if you are a candidate for the treatment. You may be eligible if you have both:

A diagnosis of MCI due to Alzheimer's or mild dementia due to Alzheimer's

Confirmation of amyloid plaques in the brain

- You may be referred to a specialist to determine if it is an appropriate treatment for you



# If You Do Not Have a Diagnosis



Learn about the 10 warning signs of Alzheimer's disease



Visit your doctor



Share your concerns



Get a diagnosis



You may be referred to a specialist to determine appropriate treatment



## My ALZ Journey

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

**Support, guidance  
and connection for  
newly diagnosed  
people and care  
partners –  
all in one app**



Free mobile app for newly diagnosed individuals and care partners



Provides personalized guidance, trusted resources and local connections



Helps users understand their diagnosis, stay independent and plan for the future



Connects users to their local Alzheimer's Association chapter for programs and support



Built with input from people living with dementia and care partners



## 24/7 Helpline



The Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline (800.272.3900) is a free service offering confidential information and support for people living with dementia, caregivers, families and the public.




## Free Education and Support

The Association offers robust information, education and support both in person and online, and helps to connect individuals with resources in the community.

## TrialMatch®

The Association connects individuals living with cognitive impairment, Alzheimer's disease or another dementia, caregivers and healthy participants with current research studies. This free, easy-to-use service helps you find clinical research that may be a good fit.





# Join us to take action for brain health

- ✓ Spread the word! Tell others about these brain-healthy habits.
- ✓ Get involved in clinical trials or a research study. Some studies focus on prevention.
- ✓ Fight Alzheimer's through a fundraising activity of your choice on a day that works for you.
- ✓ Visit [alz.org](https://www.alz.org) or call our helpline to learn more.

# QUESTIONS?

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