



Early Memory Loss and Dementia

Dementia is not a specific disease, but a set of symptoms that can be caused by many different diseases. A person with dementia has trouble with memory, language, planning, and judgment. Alzheimer’s disease is the most common cause of dementia, but not the only type of dementia. While these diseases do not have a cure, there are medications and treatments that can help manage

symptoms and may slow the progression of the disease. Symptoms of dementia start slowly and usually progress over a number of years. *Please note that symptoms of memory loss can be different in different people.*

A person who is Aging Normally...	A person with Early Memory Loss...	A person with Moderate Dementia...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Is able to take care of all daily tasks ➤ Our bodies and brains slow down a bit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Early memory loss disrupts day to day life and is noticeable to others ➤ Likely can still do many things themselves ➤ A doctor’s diagnosis is Mild Cognitive Impairment or Early-Stage Dementia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Needs help with many daily tasks, such as personal hygiene and getting dressed ➤ Can go out to social activities or do chores, but needs to be accompanied and is not safe to be left alone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sometimes forgets names or appointments, but remembers them later 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Often forgets information that is usually easily remembered: when to take medicine, conversations, or appointments ➤ Routinely misplaces belongings, such as wallet or keys ➤ Often cannot find the right word ➤ Asks the same question repeatedly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Has significant memory loss ➤ Does not recognize or confuses people that they know well ➤ Is not able to remember anything new, including someone they just met ➤ Is not able to recognize their own belongings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Usually knows the time of day and where they are physically ➤ Gets confused about the day of the week but figures it out later 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Has difficulty driving and may have trouble remembering directions, even in familiar places 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Gets lost easily or forgets where they are ➤ Loses track of the day of the week or the season
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Makes occasional errors when balancing a checkbook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Struggles to solve problems, such as keeping track of bills or making financial decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Is not able to solve problems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Occasionally needs help to use the settings on a microwave or to record a television show 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Has difficulty completing familiar tasks, such as dialing the phone or reading the clock 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Needs help and direction to complete tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sometimes feels weary of work, family, and social obligations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Has difficulty performing tasks in social or work settings ➤ Withdraws from work or social life, like when a regular churchgoer stops attending services ➤ Personality changes, such as being more irritable or angry than usual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Significant changes in personality or behavior, such as unfounded suspicions or refusing to bathe ➤ Wanders and gets lost ➤ May sleep during the day and become restless at night



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Common Questions

What should you do if you or a loved one is experiencing these symptoms?

Make an appointment to talk with a doctor. These symptoms could be signs of dementia, or they could be caused by something else. Medical conditions – such as medication side effects, thyroid problems, or depression – could cause memory loss and are treatable. *It's important to be evaluated by a doctor to determine what is causing the symptoms.*

What can be done to help if I have early memory loss?

- Talk to a doctor about medications that can help improve symptoms or slow the progression of the disease in some people.
- Eat a healthy diet that includes lots of fruits and vegetables, especially leafy green vegetables.
- Engage in mentally stimulating activities like puzzles or games.
- Socialize. Spend time with friends and family. Join a group at a church or community center.
- Stay physically active. Attend an exercise class at a senior center, go for a walk, or spend time gardening.

How common is dementia?

1 in 9 people above the age of 65 have Alzheimer's disease. In Texas, there are approximately 330,000 people living with Alzheimer's.

What increases a person's risk for early memory loss or dementia?

- Age is the biggest risk factor. Most people with dementia are above the age of 65.
- Some types of dementia are hereditary.
- Lifestyle factors – such as exercise, nutrition, and other medical conditions – can increase the risk of dementia.

How can the AGE of Central Texas Early Memory Loss Support Program help?

- The Early Memory Loss Support Program provides connection with others who are experiencing similar challenges with early memory loss.
- The Program's activities include brain boosters, art, music therapy, and current events discussion. Although there is no cure for dementia, research shows that exercising the brain may help maintain memory.

Thank you to our sources. For more information, please contact:

Alzheimer's Association of Central Texas: <http://www.alz.org/texascapital> - 24/7 Helpline: 1.800.272.3900

Mayo Clinic: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/alzheimers-disease/in-depth/memory-loss/art-20046326>

Texas State Plan for Alzheimer's: <https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/alzheimers/default.shtm>

If you are interested in joining our program, please contact us to schedule an admissions interview:

AGE of Central Texas

Early Memory Loss Support Program

512-451-4611, ext. 236

www.AGEofCentralTX.org