

LIVING IN OUR DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

Rochester
Minnesota
and the
Surrounding
Communities

IT'S ABOUT ALL OF US

DO YOU HAVE
MEMORY
CONCERNS?

ARE YOU
SUPPORTING
SOMEONE LIVING
WITH DEMENTIA?

DO YOU
LIVE
IN THIS COMMUNITY?

DO YOU
WORK
IN THIS COMMUNITY?



IF THE ANSWER IS YES TO ONE OR MORE,
THEN THIS GUIDE IS FOR YOU.



OVER
100,000
Minnesotans have dementia

**A FEW GOOD NUMBERS
TO KEEP HANDY:**



Southeastern Minnesota Area Agency on Aging
507.288.6944

Local Elder Network
507.285.5272

Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline
1.800.272.3900

Over 100,000 people in Minnesota have dementia and thousands more have memory loss that has them feeling worried or concerned. This booklet is for anyone wanting to know more about age related memory loss or worried about their own memory, as well as individuals who have been told they have mild cognitive impairment or dementia such as Alzheimer's disease, dementia with Lewy bodies, or a related disorder.

IT'S ABOUT ALL OF US

This guide is also for families, friends, youth, neighbors, businesses and all community citizens in Rochester, MN and the surrounding areas. We each have a role in making sure that people living with memory loss or dementia feel understood and respected, and are given opportunities to participate and thrive in this community.





CONTENT

4-5

WHAT TO KNOW
ABOUT NORMAL
AGING AND MEMORY

10

WHAT TO KNOW
IF SOMEONE
CLOSE TO YOU
HAS DEMENTIA

6-7

WHAT TO KNOW
IF YOU ARE
CONCERNED ABOUT
YOUR MEMORY

11

WHAT TO DO
IF YOU ARE A
COMMUNITY
MEMBER

8-9

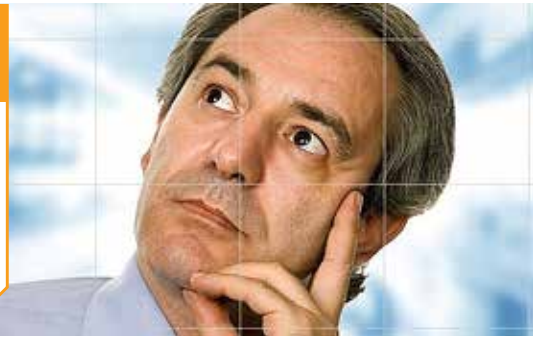
WHAT TO KNOW
IF YOU HAVE
MEMORY LOSS
OR DEMENTIA

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT

NORMAL AGING AND MEMORY



HAS THE NAME OF SOMEONE YOU SHOULD KNOW ESCAPED YOU?



HAVE YOU SPENT TIME SEARCHING FOR YOUR KEYS, WALLET, GLASSES OR THOSE IMPORTANT PAPERS?



IN TRUTH, SUCH
**“SLIPS OF
THE MIND”**
ARE NORMAL.

For most, subtle deficits in remembering begin showing up in early adulthood and continue into old age. Older adults may notice it takes longer to learn new things, they misplace things from time to time, and they don't remember names, dates, and information as well as they once did. These are signs of mild forgetfulness and not usually serious memory problems. It can be reassuring to know this, and then take steps to maintain or improve your memory and thinking.

“ My doctor told me that like the rest of my body, my brain needs routine care and stimulation. I just turned 66 and I take that advice very seriously. ”

Francine, living and working in the community



Ways to Keep Your Brain and Memory Healthy

Engage in physical activity

Exercise or just moving more may be the most important thing you can do to improve overall health, including the health of your brain.

Eat smart

A brain-healthy diet is one that is rich in fruits, vegetables, antioxidants and omega-3 fatty acids.

Incorporate good sleep habits

Keep a regular sleep schedule that includes 7-8 hours a night.

Use memory aids

Make “to do” lists, take notes, and use calendars.

Stay organized

Keep things you regularly use in the same place—keys on a hook by the door, your wallet in a basket on your dresser.

Develop new interests or hobbies

Learning new things or pursuing activities that are a bit challenging may help preserve mental functions.

Stay socially engaged

Daily contact with family, friends, and community groups can support mental sharpness.

Pay attention

The more you focus on a name, upcoming event, or new piece of information, the stronger your memory will be later.

Manage stress

Excess stress takes a toll on the brain. Consider learning about the practice of mindfulness as a powerful stress reducer.

Mindfulness is the state of paying attention, on purpose, to the present moment. This includes observing your thoughts and feelings without judgment. With practice, mindfulness can have a positive effect on the brain and overall wellbeing. There are many books, videos and audio recordings available to practice mindfulness techniques.

WHAT TO KNOW IF YOU ARE

CONCERNED

ABOUT YOUR MEMORY

There are clear differences between normal age-related memory loss and dementia. When forgetfulness becomes frequent and consistent, when it is noticed by others and is starting to affect many areas of your life, it is cause for concern. Dementia is a general term to describe symptoms that are severe enough to interfere with daily activities.

WHAT TO DO



**KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS.
FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO:
WWW.ALZ.ORG**

**SEEK AN EVALUATION FROM YOUR
FAMILY DOCTOR OR A NEUROLOGIST.**



In order to make an accurate diagnosis your doctor is likely to have a number of questions for you, and you may benefit by having a family member or friend along to answer some questions based on his or her observations.



“ I did not want to hear that I had Alzheimer’s, my husband and I cried all the way home. But knowing why I had been struggling offered us both a great deal of relief, and in a way, new hope. ”

Julie, living with Alzheimer’s disease

Know the Warning Signs

1 MEMORY LOSS THAT DISRUPTS DAILY LIFE

One of the most common signs of Alzheimer's disease, especially in the early stage, is forgetting recently learned information.

Others include forgetting important dates or events, asking for the same information over and over, and increasingly needing to rely on aides or family members for things they used to handle on their own.

2 CHALLENGES IN PLANNING OR SOLVING PROBLEMS

Some people may experience changes in their ability to develop and follow a plan, or work with numbers. They may have trouble following a familiar recipe, or keeping track of monthly bills. They may have difficulty concentrating, and take much longer to do things than they did before.

3 DIFFICULTY COMPLETING FAMILIAR TASKS AT HOME AT WORK OR AT LEISURE

People with Alzheimer's disease often find it hard to complete daily tasks. Sometimes they may have trouble driving to a familiar location, managing a budget at work, or remembering the rules of a favorite game.

4 CONFUSION WITH TIME OR PLACE

People with Alzheimer's can lose track of dates, seasons, and the

passage of time. They may have trouble understanding something if it is not happening immediately. Sometimes they may forget where they are or how they got there.

5 TROUBLE UNDERSTANDING VISUAL IMAGES AND SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS

For some people, having vision problems is a sign of Alzheimer's. They may have difficulty reading, judging distance, and determining color or contrast, which may cause problems with driving.

6 NEW PROBLEMS WITH WORDS IN SPEAKING OR WRITING

People with Alzheimer's disease may have trouble following or joining a conversation. They may stop in the middle of a conversation and have no idea how to continue, or they may repeat themselves. They may struggle with vocabulary, have problems finding the right word, or call things by the wrong name.

7 MISPLACING THINGS AND LOSING THE ABILITY TO RETRACE STEPS

A person with Alzheimer's may put things in unusual places. They may lose things and be unable to go back over their steps to find them again. Sometimes they may accuse others of stealing. This

may occur more frequently over time.



8 DECREASED OR POOR JUDGMENT

People with Alzheimer's may experience changes in judgment or decision making. For example, they may use poor judgment when dealing with money, giving large amounts to telemarketers. They may pay less attention to grooming or keeping themselves clean.

9 WITHDRAWAL FROM WORK OR SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

A person with Alzheimer's disease may start to remove themselves from hobbies, social activities, work projects, or sports. They may have trouble keeping up with a favorite sports team or remembering how to complete a favorite hobby. They may also avoid being social because of the changes they have experienced.

10 CHANGES IN MOOD AND PERSONALITY

The mood and personalities of people with Alzheimer's can change. They can become confused, suspicious, depressed, fearful, or anxious. They may be easily upset at home, at work, with friends, or in places where they are out of their comfort zone.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
GO TO ALZ.ORG

WHAT TO KNOW IF YOU HAVE BEEN TOLD YOU HAVE

MILD COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT OR *DEMENTIA*

Some people are told they have a condition called mild cognitive impairment (MCI). This causes symptoms that are similar to dementia, but aren't as serious. People with MCI have changes with memory or thinking that are generally worse than would be expected for someone of their age but do not interfere with daily activities. However, those with MCI are at a higher risk of developing dementia, but not all will.

Dementia is an umbrella term to describe conditions that are severe enough to interfere with daily activities. The most common cause of dementia in older adults is Alzheimer's disease. Other causes include Lewy body dementia, vascular dementia, and Frontotemporal diseases.

A diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or related disorder doesn't change who you are and it doesn't mean that you need to stop doing things you find meaningful. It does mean that over time you might have to do them in a different way or have some assistance. The disease does not affect the entire brain all at once. Many areas of the brain are not affected, or are affected much later.

“ Denial comes at a high cost and will impact your current and future wellbeing. Acceptance of my diagnosis has been essential to living my best life and for the wellbeing of my wife and family. ”



Khan, living with memory loss

IMPORTANT MESSAGES TO KNOW:

1

Dementia is not a natural part of aging.

2

Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain and will affect each person differently.

3

Dementia can affect memory, thinking, communication, and doing everyday tasks.

4

It's possible to live well with dementia.

5

There is more to a person than the dementia.



“ I now restructure some tasks so I can still do many things independently, and I am learning to ask for help and partner with others to do tasks I cannot do myself. The result is that the world of what I do remains large, but the realm of what I do by myself becomes a bit smaller. It’s not so bad. ”

Marv, living with Alzheimer’s disease



What you can do if you have mild cognitive impairment or dementia

ADOPT SOME NEW LIFESTYLE HABITS:

- Stop multitasking. Focus on doing one thing at a time. This is a good practice for everyone, even if you do not have dementia.
- Take your time and tell others to give you a bit more time.
- Use a calendar or smart phone with a place to store your daily schedule and keep notes about things you want to remember, names, and to-do-lists.
- Consider technological aids, here are just a few:
 - Phones or watches that beep or vibrate to do things at a specific time.
 - Home devices that offer reminders such as taking medications or locking the door.
 - Small electronic tags that attach to items do if lost a locator device will make the item beep.
 - Set a daily routine that includes thing you can and want to do.

STAY
involved

STAY
*connected
with others*

STAY
*physically
active*



The city of Rochester and surrounding communities have support groups as well as social clubs and activities for people living with dementia. To find out more about resources and services call our community partner, Elder Network at 507-285-5272.

WHAT TO KNOW IF

SOMEONE CLOSE TO YOU HAS *DEMENTIA*

Supporting and caring for someone with dementia can be very stressful, but it can also be rewarding. Care partners, relatives, and friends often go through a wide range of emotions including loss, guilt, and anger. They may also have positive feelings such as satisfaction from being able to make a difference in the wellbeing of the person with dementia.

ALL EMOTIONS ARE NORMAL.

“ I kept trying to imagine what it was like to be in John’s shoes, slowing, and surely losing abilities, self-esteem, status, and self-confidence. When I was feeling frustrated I would tell myself ‘if he could, he would.’ ”

Rosalie, wife and care partner

What to know if you are supporting someone living with dementia

- Take care of yourself and your needs. Seek out a support group in your area.
- Know that there are no perfect solutions and no perfect families. You can only do your best and your best is good enough.
- Respect the person’s self-worth and need to contribute. Help them find meaningful things to do, from everyday chores to leisure activities.
- Treat the person with dementia as an adult at all times and under all circumstances.
- Focus on what the person living with dementia can do rather than what they cannot.
- Be patient and flexible.
- Understand the person with dementia maintains the need to feel a sense of control; offer choices and ask for their input and opinions often.
- Avoid saying “do you remember?” or “I’ve already told you.” Simply repeating it again for the person with memory loss, or offering them a written note they can refer to later will go a long way in easing the tension for each of you.
- Participate in a Dementia Friends Information Session, and if you are working, ask your employer to host a Dementia@Work Training. Call Elder Network at 507-285-5272 for information.
- Request a Caregiver Resource Guide by calling the Southeastern MN Area Agency on Aging at 507-288-6944, or visit their website: semaarochestermn.org

WHAT COMMUNITY MEMBERS CAN DO

TO SUPPORT THOSE WITH *MEMORY LOSS*

Our community plays a vital role in the health and wellbeing of its citizens living with dementia and their care partners. Recently a study of the community was completed to better understand the knowledge and needs of the citizens. As a result, Rochester and the surrounding community are taking action to become:

- ▶ A community where care partners and families feel supported and receive timely information on the services and resources available to them.
- ▶ A place where those impacted by dementia feel respected and understood, and where they are valued as contributing members of our community.
- ▶ A community where every individual, business, and organization receives educational trainings to increase awareness and understand what they can do to make a difference.
- ▶ A place that offers persons living with dementia and their families ways to stay engaged and connected through programs, clubs, volunteer experiences, and the arts.

“ I cared for my grandma when she was living with Alzheimer’s. I wish I had received more information and training. To honor my grandmother and support my community, I am working to bring more awareness and education to teens and young adults. ”

Alex, local high school student



WHAT
TO DO
NEXT

1

Become a Dementia Friend by attending a Dementia Friends Information Session.

2

Become trained as a Dementia Friends Champion and offer Dementia Friends Information Sessions.

3

Join the ‘Youth for a Dementia Friendly Community’ movement.

4

Host or attend a Dementia-Friendly@Work Training.

5

For information about anything listed call 507-285-5272 or see our Facebook page at

ACT on Alzheimer's is a statewide, volunteer-driven collaboration seeking large-scale social change and building community capacity to transform Minnesota's response to Alzheimer's disease. Rochester is one of over 40 communities in Minnesota dedicated to ACT on Alzheimer's.

IT'S ABOUT ALL OF US



“ ACT on Alzheimer's aligns perfectly with our vision. Rochester has set goals to become the world's most compassionate, healthy and welcoming city where all persons will feel included and safe. ”

Ardell Brede, Mayor of Rochester Minnesota



**Rochester and
Surrounding
Communities**

This guide has been produced by citizens of Rochester MN, including those living with memory loss, as well as support from ACT on Alzheimer's.