



WARNING SIGNS OF ALZHEIMER'S



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10 warning signs of Alzheimer's

Alzheimer's is a disease that usually affects older people. It is associated with changes in the chemical reactions in the brain.

According to 2013 statistics there are 44 million people living with Alzheimer's worldwide; this number is expected to rise to 75.6 million in 2030.

At present there are no exact numbers for people with Alzheimer's in Oman.

The diagnosis is made by asking the patient and a close family member about the symptoms and how they affect their daily function as well as doing some cognitive test, blood investigations and sometimes brain scan to exclude other conditions which present like Alzheimer's .

Early diagnosis is very important, as it helps the patients and the family to have explanations to what could be a puzzling behavior. Although there is no cure for Alzheimer's at present, the medications currently available slow the progression of the illness, making patients live independently longer, they also help with the behavioral symptoms like the agitation, abnormal thinking and the mood changes.

Early diagnosis protects people from falling victims for embezzlement or financial abuse as they may not be able to manage their financial affairs.

The following 10 warning signs of Alzheimer's were developed by **Alzheimer's International Association** to help with the diagnosis. If you notice any of them, please see a doctor.

10 warning signs of Alzheimer's

- 1- Memory changes that disrupt daily life.
- 2- Challenges in planning or solving problems.
- 3- Difficulty completing familiar tasks.
- 4- Confusion with time or place.
- 5- Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships.
- 6- New problems with words in speaking or writing.
- 7- Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps.
- 8- Decreased or poor judgment.
- 9- Withdrawal from work or social activities.
- 10- Changes in mood and personality.

1 Memory changes that disrupt daily life

One of the most common signs of Alzheimer's, especially in the early stages, is forgetting recently learned information. Others include forgetting important dates or events; asking for the same information over and over; relying on memory aides (e.g., reminder notes or electronic devices) or family members for things they used to handle on their own.

What's typical? Sometimes forgetting names or appointments, but remembering them later.

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.

What's typical? Making occasional errors when balancing a checkbook.

3 Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work or at leisure

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

What's typical? Occasionally needing help to use the settings on a microwave or to record a television show.

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.

What's typical? Getting confused about the day of the week but figuring it out later.

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. In terms of perception, they may pass a mirror and think someone else is in the room. They may not realize they are the person in the mirror.

What's typical? Vision changes related to cataracts.

6 New problems with words in speaking or writing

People with Alzheimer's 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 (e.g., calling a "watch" a "hand-clock").

What's typical? Sometimes having trouble finding the right word.

7 Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps

A person with Alzheimer's disease 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.

What's typical? Misplacing things from time to time, such as a pair of glasses or the remote control.

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.

What's typical? Making a bad decision once in a while..

9 Withdrawal from work or social activities

A person with Alzheimer's 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.

What's typical? Sometimes feeling weary of work, family and social obligations.

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.

What's typical? Developing very specific ways of doing things and becoming irritable when a routine is disrupted

If you or someone you know experience some of these signs, please see a doctor. Early diagnosis gives you a chance to seek treatment and plan your future. The Alzheimer's Support group run by Oman Alzheimer's Society can help.

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Reference: Alzheimer's International Association