

Senile Dementia versus Alzheimer's⁽¹⁾

There is a difference

The terms Alzheimer's and Dementia are often used interchangeably, but they have very different meanings.

- Dementia is a syndrome that describes a wide range of symptoms. These symptoms impact a person's ability to perform everyday activities independently.
- Alzheimer's is a neurodegenerative disease that is the most common cause of dementia. In Alzheimer's, the brain may show signs of the disease before the person experiences any symptoms.

We will present each of the diseases separately for you.

What is Dementia (Senility)?

Dementia is the name for a group of symptoms that:

- a. make it hard to remember,
- b. think clearly,
- c. make decisions, or
- d. even control your emotions.

It is important to note that dementia is not a disease per se, and the occurrence of dementia symptoms are caused by various conditions.

Senile also known as Senile dementia is the mental deterioration (loss of intellectual ability) that is associated with or the characteristics of old age.

What is Alzheimer's Disease?

Alzheimer's disease is a neurological brain disorder, which causes problems with memory. It is named after a German physician, Alois Alzheimer, who first described it in 1906.

It is important to note that a person can have Alzheimer's without experiencing the symptoms of dementia.

Alzheimer's disease is a neurological brain disorder that causes problems with:

- memory,
- thinking skills, and
- behavior. ⁽¹⁾

Caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's can be rewarding but it has its challenges. Early diagnosis, having open communication and doing some simple activities can significantly help in caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's. Here are ways to help your loved one cope with Alzheimer's or dementia.

1. Seek Early Diagnosis

While an Alzheimer's diagnosis is extraordinarily difficult for everyone involved, early diagnosis can make a significant impact in quality of life, giving patients and families the opportunity to plan and find an appropriate level of care.

Common symptoms to watch for:

- Forgetting recently learned information
- Trouble completing ordinary tasks
- Disengaging from work, hobbies or socializing
- Difficulty following a conversation
- Using the wrong words for everyday things

If you see these signs in your loved one, make an appointment with their healthcare provider.

2. Open a dialogue about Alzheimer's.

Starting a conversation about Alzheimer's with a loved one is daunting. For seniors, it can trigger fear, anxiety, or grief. Adult children may understandably delay this conversation, which can make things worse. Approach the topic – and your loved one – with sensitivity. You can reassure your loved one that you will provide ongoing support.

3. Learn Techniques for Alzheimer's and dementia care

Providing a calm environment and predictable routine can help your loved one cope with the confusion, agitation, and anxiety.

- Plan regular activities and exercise
- Focus on nutrition
- Stay calm when they are agitated

4. Don't delay important decisions

Take care of financial, legal, and long-term care planning issues as soon as possible. "Try to involve your loved one in decision-making, if they are capable of providing input, and consider their wishes related to the future care and end-of-life issues," said Abramson. With apposite attitude, patience – and help when you need it – you can provide much needed care and support for your loved one.⁽²⁾

Bibliography and additional help

(1) <https://www.alzinfo.org>



<https://www.beconnectedaz.org/organizations/area-agency-on-aging-region-one-maricopa-county>

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(2) Viva, A Magazine for PebbleCreek residents, October 2021; Catherine Uretsky, Publisher & Editor.