



## Alzheimer's Disease

### What is Alzheimer's disease?

Alzheimer's is a brain disease that slowly affects memory, thinking and behavior. It is caused by the accumulation of plaques (beta amyloid) and tangles (tau protein) in the brain which lead to brain shrinkage.

### What are the signs and symptoms of Alzheimer's?

Early signs of Alzheimer's disease can include missing appointments, getting lost in familiar places and forgetting recent conversations and events. Eventually the ability to multi-task becomes difficult, as does the ability to carry out daily activities such as paying bills or following a recipe.

### What are the stages of Alzheimer's?

**Preclinical Alzheimer's disease:** The brain changes related to Alzheimer's disease can begin up to 20 years before a person notices any memory symptoms. Many people with preclinical Alzheimer's disease usually have a family history of the disease.

**Mild Alzheimer's disease:** In this stage it is clear to friends, family and medical staff that the person is having problems with memory and thinking. Issues may include difficulty with problem-solving, managing finances, personality changes and misplacing belongings.

**Moderate Alzheimer's disease:** During this stage confusion is worse and people typically need more help with self-care and daily activities such as cooking, cleaning and personal care. Issues may include losing track of the day/month/season, poor judgment, wandering and significant personality and/or behavior changes.

**Late-Stage Alzheimer's disease:** In this stage mental function continues to decline and there are typically problems with physical abilities. Problems typically include the inability to communicate clearly and the need for assistance with eating, dressing and toileting. The person may eventually be unable to sit or walk without assistance and may lose control over bladder and bowel functions.