

# Loving your Brain

## Recognizing Early Signs and Symptoms of Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia

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Building Our Largest Dementia (BOLD) Infrastructure



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THIS RESOURCE WAS PRODUCED AND SUPPORTED THROUGH FUNDING BY CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, NATIONAL CENTER FOR CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION AND HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAM GRANT #1NU58DP006923-11-00

# Learning Objectives

- Identifying normal and non-normal aging
- Defining MCI, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease
- Stages of Alzheimer's
- Benefits of early detection
- Identifying early detection signs and symptoms
- Discuss the early warning signs and symptoms



# What is normal healthy aging? What is not?

## What is normal forgetfulness and what is not?

- **Normal Healthy Aging (Common normal aging)**
  - Simple forgetfulness
  - Cognitive Changes
  - Delay in recalling names, places, dates and events
- **Not normal Healthy Aging (serious memory problem)**
  - When memory changes begin to interfere with normal daily life and activities
  - Forgetting why things are the way they are, or why/how something works the way it does



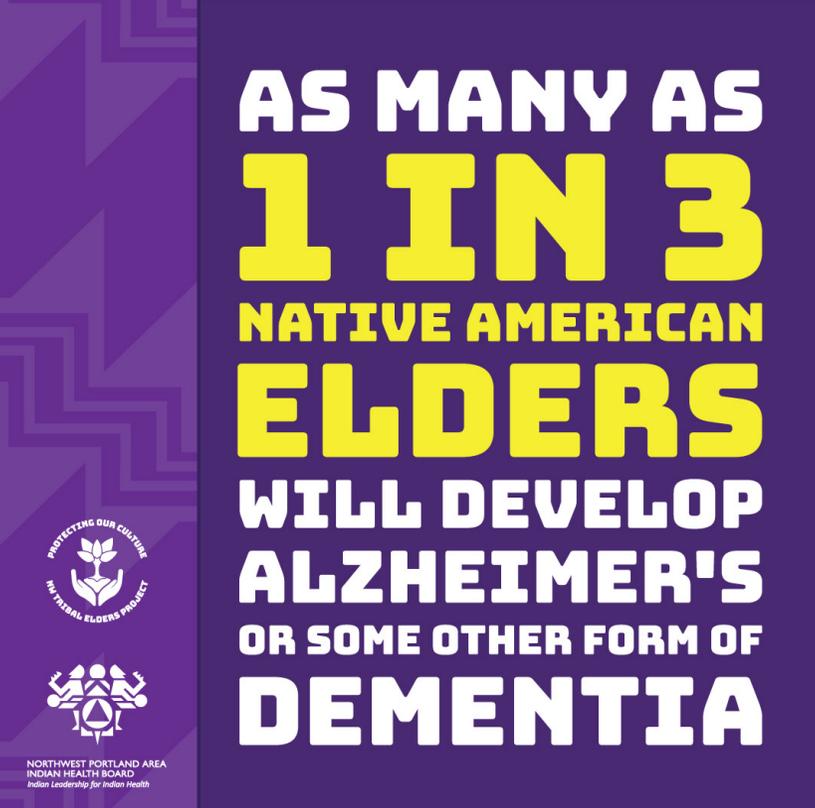
# Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI)

- MCI is a condition, an early stage of cognitive change.
- Some older adults experience having more memory problems or other thinking problems than other people their age
- Can still carry out independently their daily activities.
- Some signs of MCI include:
  - Losing things often
  - Forgetting to go to important events or appointments
  - Having more trouble coming up with specific word usage than other people their age
- People with MCI are more likely to develop Alzheimer's disease or dementia than people without. However, not everyone with MCI will develop Alzheimer's disease.



# What is Dementia

- Dementia is the loss of cognitive functioning — thinking, remembering, and reasoning — to such an extent that it interferes with a person's daily life and activities. Some people with dementia cannot control their emotions, and their personalities may change. Dementia ranges in severity from the mildest stage, when it is just beginning to affect a person's functioning, to the most severe stage, when the person must depend completely on others for basic activities of living.



**AS MANY AS  
1 IN 3  
NATIVE AMERICAN  
ELDERS  
WILL DEVELOP  
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OR SOME OTHER FORM OF  
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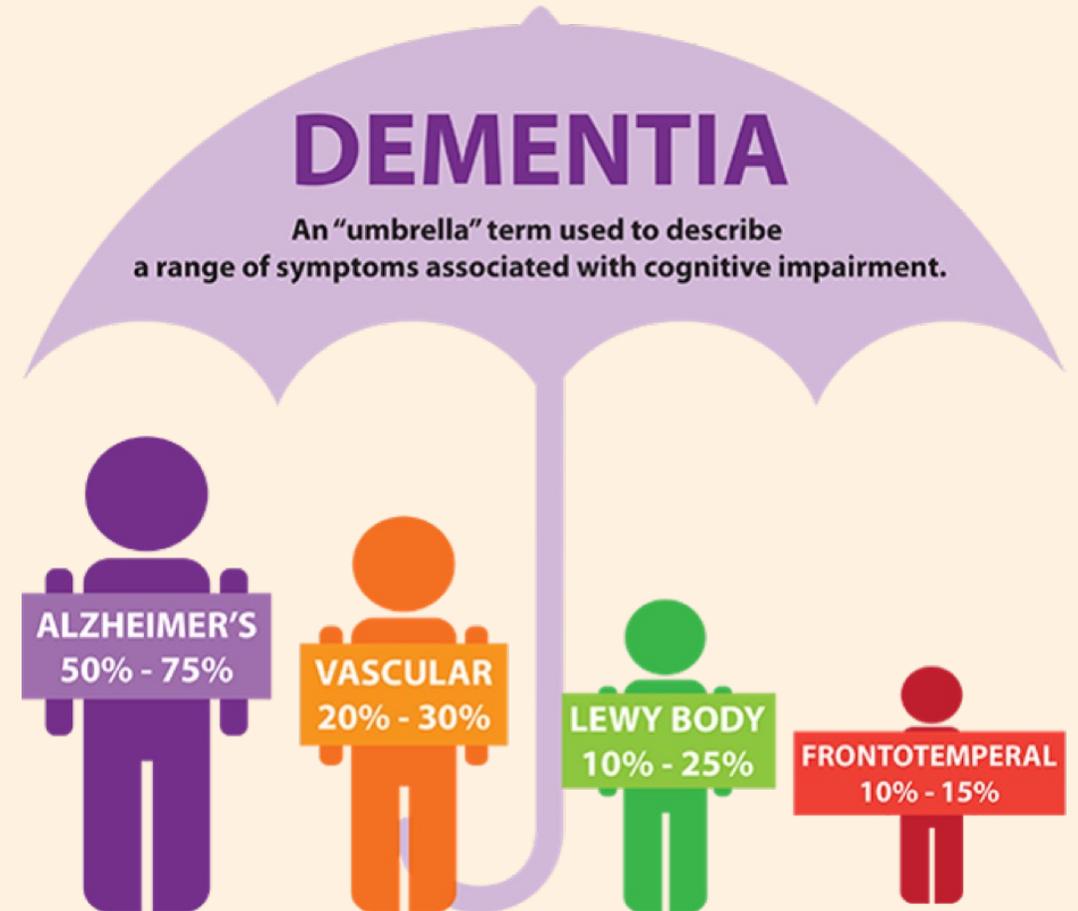
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# What are some common types of dementias?

- Alzheimer's disease
- Frontotemporal dementia
- Lewy body dementia
- Vascular dementia
- Mixed Dementia



# Understanding Different Types of Dementia

TYPES OF DEMENTIA			
Alzheimer's Disease	Frontotemporal Dementia	Lewy Body Dementia	Vascular Dementia
SYMPTOMS			
<p><b>Mild</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wandering and getting lost</li> <li>• Repeating questions</li> </ul> <p>Moderate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problems recognizing friends and family</li> <li>• Impulsive behavior</li> </ul> <p>Severe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cannot communicate</li> </ul>	<p><b>Behavioral and Emotional</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty planning and organizing</li> <li>• Impulsive behaviors</li> <li>• Emotional flatness or excessive emotions</li> </ul> <p><b>Movement Problems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shaky hands</li> <li>• Problems with balance and walking</li> </ul> <p><b>Language Problems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty making or understanding speech</li> </ul> <p><i>There are several types of frontotemporal disorders, and symptoms can vary by type.</i></p>	<p><b>Cognitive Decline</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inability to concentrate, pay attention, or stay alert</li> <li>• Disorganized or illogical ideas</li> </ul> <p><b>Movement Problems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Muscle rigidity</li> <li>• Loss of coordination</li> <li>• Reduced facial expression</li> </ul> <p><b>Sleep Disorders</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insomnia</li> <li>• Excessive daytime sleepiness</li> </ul> <p><b>Visual Hallucinations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forgetting current or past events</li> <li>• Misplacing items</li> <li>• Trouble following instructions or learning new information</li> <li>• Hallucinations or delusions</li> <li>• Poor judgment</li> </ul>

[Understanding Different Types of Dementia \(nih.gov\)](http://nih.gov)



# What is Alzheimer's Disease?

- Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia.
- It is a progressive disease beginning with mild memory loss and possibly leading to loss of the ability to carry on a conversation and respond to the environment.
- Alzheimer's disease involves parts of the brain that control thought, memory, and language.
- It can seriously affect a person's ability to carry out daily activities.

Source: [https://www.cdc.gov/aging/alzheimers-disease-dementia/about-](https://www.cdc.gov/aging/alzheimers-disease-dementia/about-alzheimers.html#whatisalzheimers)

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# Stages of Alzheimer's disease

- Pre-Clinical, Mild or sometimes called early-stage
- Moderate
- Severe or sometimes called late-stage



# What is early detection?

- **Opportunity for risk reduction**
- **Recognizing when a loved one is experiencing memory concerns**
  - Changes in their memory, thinking and ability to perform day-to-day activities
- **Identifying affected loved ones changes in memory**
- **Early detection strategies - approaching the problem**
  - Starting the conversation with the person
  - Starting the conversation with the family, friends and caregiver/partner
  - Identify forms of measurement e.g., screening tools, identifying cognitive changes



# Why is detection important?

- Detecting cognitive changes early on
- Identifying stages (mild, moderate, severe)
- Find support and resources
- Holistic health benefits (physical, mental, emotional, social, spiritual)
- Future planning and preparation



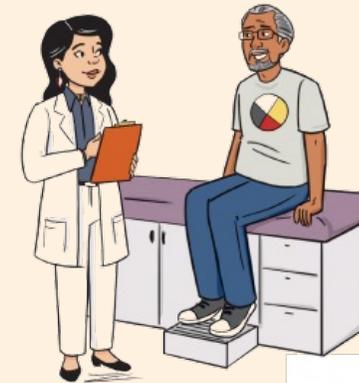
# Benefits of Early detection and screening

- **What we know**

- Early detection of symptoms is important, some causes can be identified resulting in improved symptoms
- Overall, most instances of dementia do not have a single point of causation. Treatments are limited in their usefulness
- Early diagnosis can help with managing the condition and planning ahead

## **Early Detection Matters.**

*Get health screening tests and wellness check-ups each year at your local Urban Indian Health facility.*



*Watch the video and learn more at [ncuih.org/wisdomkeeper](http://ncuih.org/wisdomkeeper)*



This publication was supported by grant number NU38OT0000298-02-01 funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the CDC or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The mark "CDC" is owned by HHS and is used with permission. Use of this logo is not an endorsement by HHS or CDC of any particular product, service, or enterprise.



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# What are the warning signs and symptoms?

- Memory loss
- Challenges in planning or solving problems
- Difficulty completing familiar tasks
- Confusion with time or place
- Trouble understating visual images and spatial relationship



# Warning signs and symptoms continued....

- New problems with words in speaking or writing
- Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps
- Decreased or poor judgement
- Withdrawal from work or social activities
- Changes in mood and personality



# When might we decide to screen/assess?

- Age
- Repeated injuries and falls
- Other health conditions



# We have.....

- Identified normal and non-normal aging
- Defined MCI, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease
- Learned the stages of Alzheimer's
- Learned that obtaining an early diagnosis can help with managing the condition and planning ahead
- Identified early detection warning signs and symptoms
- Discussed the early warning signs and symptoms



# Thank you

To learn more about the NW Elder/BOLD program or to let us know how we can support your programs, you can reach me at

[cwilson@npaih.org](mailto:cwilson@npaih.org)



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