

UNDERSTANDING THE STAGES

The stages of Alzheimer's disease

While Alzheimer's disease has several stages, it is important to keep in mind that as time goes on, symptoms of Alzheimer's disease get worse. Because Alzheimer's can last between 2 to 20 years, these changes may happen quickly in some people, and slowly in others. Every person who has Alzheimer's is different. But for most people the disease lasts about 8 or 9 years.

You will hear that Alzheimer's has 3 stages:

Stage 1 is the first or early stage when symptoms are not very severe, and can come and go

Stage 2 is the middle stage when symptoms are more obvious

Stage 3 or the final stage when symptoms are very severe and noticeable.

In the early stage –Stage 1, you may notice the person has problems with memory, thinking, paying attention, and changeable moods.

During the middle stage, these early stage symptoms get worse. Also, most people begin to have trouble communicating. This is the time when some of the difficult behaviors that I will talk about shortly start to show up.

In the third or final stage, people lose control of their bodily functions such as their ability to swallow. They will become more and more immobile, and will not even respond to their outside world. Sadly, stage 3 is the time when the person will eventually die, if not directly from Alzheimer's, then from the fact that the disease begins to affect the working of all the body's organs, such as the lungs, kidneys, or heart.

Caregivers need help too!

Just as no two people with Alzheimer's disease are alike, no two caregivers experience giving care in the same way. Use this website to find help with difficult behaviors that you are seeing now, and come back another time when new behaviors happen.