

# HSI Connection

Helping People • Changing Lives

## QUESTION

### True or False?

Memory loss and confusion are just normal parts of aging.

## ANSWER

### False!

Most people remain alert and competent as they age, it may take them longer to remember things—but a strong pattern of forgetfulness usually has a root cause of some disease process — Alzheimer’s is a common one in people over 65.

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## The realities of Alzheimer’s disease

Alzheimer’s disease is a progressive and irreversible medical condition. It often begins in the part of the brain that controls memory, but over time it also affects speech, thought, personality, judgment, emotions, behavior, and the ability to function independently. Approximately 4 million Americans have the disease. Typically people are diagnosed after 65 years of age, but the average age at diagnosis is about 80 years.

### What causes Alzheimer’s?

Currently, scientists have not found the exact cause of Alzheimer’s disease, but most agree that a variety of factors interacting together probably cause the disease. It is a known fact that people with Alzheimer’s develop abnormal structures in their brain called plaques and tangles that control thinking, learning, sleep, and memory. The test that confirms these changes cannot be done until an autopsy is performed.

It is clear that the risk of developing Alzheimer’s disease increases with age. Studies have shown that one in 20 persons over 65 years of age have Alzheimer’s disease, while nearly half of all persons over 85 years have been diagnosed with the disease. It can occur in people as young as 30 years of age, but this is very rare.

Other possible causes of Alzheimer’s disease that have been studied but are not well understood include viruses, calcium imbalances, high concentrations of aluminum in the brain tissues, and imbalances of the brain chemicals that carry messages back and forth between the nerve cells (neurotransmitters).

What are your chances of developing Alzheimer’s if someone in your family has Alzheimer’s? Research has shown a possible link between having a family history of Alzheimer’s and developing the disease, but the evidence is unclear. “Genetic makeup may make a family line more susceptible to the triggers that spark the development of Alzheimer’s disease, but heredity seems to be only part of the equation. Environmental factors such as head trauma, limited education, low stimulation and poor social connections with family and society are circumstances that increase the possibility of developing the disease,” states Bonnie Dressen, BAN, CCM, Supervisor of HSI In-Home Assisted Living program. “Susceptible persons may ward off the disease, delay its beginning, or mitigate its effects to a degree by the way they live. Stretching and working the brain and feeling connected and nurtured in life can make a documented difference in some cases.”

### Is dementia the same thing as Alzheimer’s?

The term *dementia* describes a group of symptoms, which may include confusion, memory loss, disorientation, and difficulty with reasoning. Fifteen percent of people over 65 years of age suffer from dementia; of that group, about 60 percent are the result of Alzheimer, with the remaining 40 percent having a variety of other causes. Some of these causes may be reversible, but others are not. Reversible causes of dementia include medication reactions or overuse, malnutrition, thyroid conditions, diseases of the heart or lungs that deprive the brain of

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## Symptom

### CHECKLIST

The Alzheimer's Association has developed a list of warning signs that include common symptoms of Alzheimer's disease (some also apply to other types of dementia). Individuals who show several of these symptoms should see a physician for a complete examination. A person with Alzheimer's may have:

- ✓ **Memory loss that affects job skills:** having frequent forgetfulness or unexplainable confusion at home or in the workplace.
- ✓ **Difficulty performing familiar tasks:** preparing a meal and not only forgetting to serve it, but also forgetting he or she made it.
- ✓ **Problems with language:** forgetting simple words or substituting inappropriate words, making his or her sentences difficult to understand.
- ✓ **Disorientation to time and place:** becoming lost on their own street, not knowing where or how he or she got there or how to get back home.
- ✓ **Poor or decreased judgment:** dressing inappropriately in noticeable ways, wearing a bathrobe to the store or several blouses on a hot day.
- ✓ **Problems with abstract thinking:** having difficulty recognizing numbers or performing basic calculation.
- ✓ **Problems with misplacing things:** putting keys, a wallet, or other items in inappropriate places - such as an iron in the freezer, or a wristwatch in the sugar bowl - then not recalling how they got there.
- ✓ **Changes in mood or behavior:** tending to exhibit more rapid mood swings for no apparent reason.
- ✓ **Changes in personality:** having personality changes, either suddenly or over a period of time. Someone who is generally easy going may become angry, suspicious or fearful.
- ✓ **Loss of initiative:** losing interest and becoming uninvolved in many or all of his or her usual pursuits.

— *Information on the 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's, from the Alzheimer's Association.*

oxygen and nutrition, sleep deprivation, dehydration, depression, or anxiety. Irreversible causes of dementia include complications of high blood pressure, strokes, Parkinson's disease, brain tumors, or head trauma. In order to determine the root cause of dementia symptoms, it is critical to get a complete evaluation from a physician.

### How does Alzheimer's progress over time?

The progression of the disease varies from person to person making it difficult for the medical professionals to predict. Alzheimer's disease can have a fast or slow course - some may have the disease for only a few years while others up to 20 years. The type and severity of symptoms also vary but typically there is a steady decline in abilities over years.

In the early stages of Alzheimer's the disease usually starts out very slowly and gradually, so much so that the symptoms might not even be noticed. Areas of the brain that control short-term memory tend to be affected first. The person might have mild forgetfulness over events, phone numbers, words, activities, or names of people, and mild personality changes such as apathy, passivity, restlessness, or a lack of spontaneity.

As the disease progresses, it becomes more difficult for the person with Alzheimer's to write, handle money, work with numbers when paying bills, read, organize their days, make decisions, or do simple tasks like brushing teeth or combing hair. The person also may become more self-absorbed and withdrawn, and less neat.

In the later stages of the disease, the person may repeat questions over and over, find it difficult to speak or be unable to speak, lose their judgment, lose physical coordination, need help with dressing, eating, and bathing, be unable to identify family and friends, be disoriented about time and date, unable to describe where he or she lives, be uncooperative, and have erratic mood swings. The person requires constant and total care.

### Is Alzheimer's a treatable disease?

At the present; there is no treatment to cure Alzheimer's, but there are many medications and steps to take that can help control the symptoms of sleeplessness, wandering, anxiety, depression, and agitation. These measures can help the person with Alzheimer's disease be more comfortable and independent, and help ease the every day care for their caregiver.

In the early and middle stages of the disease, some people are given FDA approved drugs called tacrine (THA or Cognex), donepezil or aricept, which tend to slow down the development of symptoms. Dressen says, "These drugs are

### Important Information:

The information that is provided in this newsletter is not meant to be used to diagnose individual cases. Only a health care provider or mental health professional is qualified to diagnose Alzheimer's or other kinds of dementia, and prescribe treatment.

very effective in managing symptoms for some persons, but the effect is temporary. They act by enhancing chemicals in the brain, and in weeks to 10 months or so of therapy, they lose this effect, and the symptoms return."

Great strides are being made toward understanding this disease. Research in Alzheimer's is booming. Funding for 2001 will approach \$500 million according to the Alzheimer's Association. Recent research discoveries support the hope that the onset of Alzheimer's may be delayed through use of existing common treatments such as anti-inflammatories, anti-oxidants, or hormone replacement.

### Where do you get help?

Don't ignore the changes you see in yourself or your aging loved ones. Since people often attribute confusion or forgetfulness to old age, some may think nothing can be done about it, and often, treatable conditions are overlooked.

It is important to see a doctor or health care provider to discuss symptoms and determine the causes. You may find that the symptoms may stem from a treatable illness. Or, if it is Alzheimer's, the earlier one knows, the earlier you or your loved one can get the information, help and support needed to plan for the future. It is important to give the doctor or health care provider accurate and detailed information. If you are suffering from memory loss, you may want to ask a family member or friend join you during your appointment.

If you or someone you love is diagnosed with Alzheimer's, it is important for you to reach out for information and support. There are many excellent resources available to you in our community. The Alzheimer's Association is an excellent place to begin. They provide support groups, telephone help lines, educational programs, publications, and information about local services. Listings of these resources located on page 5.

## You're not alone ... We're here to help!

Persons with Alzheimer's and their caregivers are not alone! HSI has provided services for the elderly for over 30 years. We have developed the necessary supports so that those in need can stay in their own homes and communities. Supportive services such as HSI's In-Home Assisted Living and adult day programs provide respite and support.

Circle of Friends, our adult day program is an excellent option for individuals with Alzheimer's, as well as for their caregivers. "Circle of Friends is designed to meet various needs of the participants and their families. We provide respite care and peace of mind," says Deborah Boentje, Coordinator of HSI Circle of Friends. "It's a delight watching the friendships form, rewarding to hear from the caregivers the positive changes they are noticing and more importantly being able to keep their loved one at home with the program's assistance." Circle of Friends provides socialization and personal care for individuals with Alzheimer's in a safe,

pleasant environment while providing needed respite time for the caregiver.

Our mobile in-home assisted living offers additional support for families. In-home assisted living fills a gap in services for people with chronic conditions who need short periods of assistance throughout the day.

Through an initial assessment, our care managers design a care plan that fits individual needs and works toward maintaining independence. A variety of flexible services such as shopping, cleaning/laundry, personal grooming, medication set up and monitoring complex health concerns is provided at affordable prices. When appropriate, our goal is to make staying at home a viable alternative to a nursing home setting. For more information about our adult day program or mobile in-home assisted living please call HSI Resources for ElderCare at (651) 275-1910.

We  
now  
accept



## Tips for Caregivers

“The most important thing for caregivers to remember is that you can’t do it alone and you also need to take care of yourself. It can be hard to think of doing one more thing when you are already stressed and pressed for time. But there are many wonderful support systems in our community: respite care, support groups, adult day programs, social workers, home health aides, home nurses, etc. No one needs to go it alone!” states Bonnie Dressen, Supervisor of HSI In-Home Assisted Living. Dressen offers the following suggestions:

- Share and connect with others who understand. Once people join a support group they consider it a lifeline that really helps them stay positive, supported and feel cared for.



- Set-up some form of respite time for you and your loved one. It is important to have time away.
- Remember that behaviors vary from day-to-day, and from hour-to-hour. There are good times along with challenging times.
- Structure your days with a flexible schedule.
- Slow down and listen patiently. The person with Alzheimer’s may wander around the topic, but they will usually get back to it.
- Sit down, take the person’s hand, look them in the eye, and then speak - sometimes this will help when they are agitated.
- Break up the task you are doing with them into small parts, or help them to do so for themselves.
- Understand that even though a person’s behavior may be childlike, they have adult feelings.
- Understand that people can lose their ability to express themselves long before they lose their ability to understand.
- Understand that suspiciousness happens because the person’s reasoning ability is gone or limited. Stop and redirect the conversation - don’t try to confront the person or to talk them out of their belief. Try to remember that the accusations are not really directed at you.
- Understand that forgetting what they said after they said it is common, and that is why they repeat things. Stop and redirect the conversation - don’t tell them they already said it, just listen. Remember that they can’t help it.
- If you are someone who uses the Internet, chat rooms for people with Alzheimer’s disease and their family members can be a very valuable way to connect and receive additional support and resources.

## HSI Locations

8200 Hadley Ave. S.  
Cottage Grove, MN  
55016  
(651) 458-4116

Mon, Wed, Fri:  
8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Tues and Thurs:  
8:30 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

121 11th Ave. S.E.  
Forest Lake, MN  
55025  
(651) 251-5220

Mon-Wed, Fri:  
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Tues-Thurs:  
8:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

7066 Stillwater Blvd. N.  
Oakdale, MN 55128  
(651) 777-5222

Mon - Thurs:  
7:30 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.  
Fri:  
7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Sat:  
8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Sundays and Holidays  
(Crisis Clinic only)  
9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

TLC II  
5620 Memorial Dr.  
Stillwater, MN 55082  
(651) 430-1791

Mon - Fri:  
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

375 East Orleans St.  
Stillwater, MN 55082  
(651) 430-2720

Mon, Tues,  
Wed, Thurs:  
8:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.  
Fri:  
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

**TDD: (651) 770-6834**

**[www.hsicares.org](http://www.hsicares.org)**

*Emergency Services  
phones answered  
24-hours a day  
651-777-4455*

## IMPORTANCE OF GIVING

### Making a difference in another's life

"I receive a lot of satisfaction from helping other people and keeping them in their own homes. It seems so simple to deliver a meal or visit someone; it makes such a difference in a person's life. I feel more knowledgeable about the different phases of aging and what families go through in these various stages and phases." Joan Wright-an HSI volunteer for 10 years.

HSI Resources for ElderCare has inviting opportunities for all generations. A relationship with someone who cares if a senior gets up in the morning may mean the difference for that senior staying healthful or sinking into illness out of sadness. That works both ways. Giving keeps us healthier longer. Make a difference in your community by sharing your time, talents and energy with the elderly. There is a "giving" niche for everyone. Call Celinda Doyle at (651) 351-3121 to find yours.

Volunteers needed for our 9th Annual Golf Tournament at Stillwater Country Club on Monday, July 24. Call Mark Kristensen at (651) 251-5095 for more information.

## Resources, Support and Advocacy

**Alzheimer's Association National Office**  
919 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 1000  
Chicago, Illinois 60611  
800-272-3900  
www.alz.org

**Alzheimer's Association Minnesota Lakes Chapter**  
4570 West 77th Street, Suite 198  
Edina, MN 55435-5015  
612-857-0550  
www.alzmn.org

**Alzheimer's Disease Education & Referral Center**  
P.O. Box 8250  
Silver Spring, MD 20907-8250  
800-438-4380  
www.alzheimers.org

## Mental Health Information

**HSI**  
7066 Stillwater Blvd. N.  
Oakdale, MN 55128  
651-777-5222  
www.hsicares.org

**American Psychiatric Association**  
1400 K Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005  
202-682-6000  
www.psych.org

**American Psychological Association**  
750 First Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
202-336-5500  
www.apa.org

**The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)**  
Public Inquiries office can be reached at:  
6001 Executive Boulevard, Rm. 8184  
MSC 9663  
Bethesda, MD 20892  
301-443-4513  
www.NIMH.NIH.gov

## QUESTIONS?

Would you like more information on our services? Call . . . (651) 777-5222

## HSI BOARD

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**Chief Executive Officer**

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### From the CEO...

The National Institute on Aging has estimated the costs for Alzheimer's - for medical and long-term care, home care, and loss of productivity for caregivers at nearly \$100 billion each year. But the true cost is often in the emotional and physical toll on the caregiving spouse and children. The drain on the caregiver can be devastating. Community systems of care are needed to help provide support for frail seniors and their caregiving families.

The good news is that support services do work - they help maintain a quality of life even while coping with Alzheimer's. HSI is part of this initiative and we are proud to be able to help uphold the dignity of individuals and families who are living with the deterioration of Alzheimer'-but funding these services is a continuing challenge.

Many sources of community support are needed to maintain a truly effective system of care.

Volunteers have a huge impact and are a key part of HSI's initiatives. HSI has also established an endowment fund for seniors through the generous support of Board Member, Gerhard Schmidt and his wife, Sandra. As this fund grows from other legacy gifts it will be a permanent source of support for frail seniors and their caregivers. If you would like to learn more about this fund or legacy giving, please contact HSI's Development Office at (651) 251-5095.

*Together, we do make a difference!*

We would like to acknowledge the Andersen Foundation for their financial support in partnering with HSI in the development of our Senior Initiative 2000.

This initiative will help meet the growing needs of seniors in Washington County.

# HSI

a private nonprofit corporation

Human Services, Inc.

7066 Stillwater Boulevard North

Oakdale, Minnesota 55128-3937

(651) 777-5222

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## HSI Connection

### FEATURE FOCUS

#### Alzheimer's disease:

*Where did I put my glasses?*

*Did I remember to turn off the stove?*

*What was I looking for?*

*Did I take my medication this morning?*

*What was their name?*

Most of us have forgotten where we have placed items, parked our car or even someone's name. For some there is concern about their forgetfulness, or that of a loved one. A certain amount of trouble remembering things is normal, but if there is a pattern of forgetfulness or confusion, it may be worth considering if it is a symptom of Alzheimer's disease.

### WE'RE HERE TO HELP!



## Care options for your elderly loved one.

We're here to help! Many families are facing the issue of caring for an elderly loved one. For many searching and navigating through health and social service systems to find the care you need can be challenging, time consuming and confusing. Yet the choices you make have an impact on quality of life of someone dear to you. Our newly expanded Resources for ElderCare works toward maintaining the independence and well being of elders in their home and community. "Our goal is to be part of helping older adults get the most out of their lives. We want to be there assisting families to address problems before they reach a crisis point. Our focus is to maintain family unity and enable their elderly loved ones to preserve their sense of self-worth and independence" says Rob McDonough, HSI Director of Resources for ElderCare.

Our optional affordable services are designed to meet your needs. By calling just one number, our qualified, caring staff will work carefully with you to determine the best options for your situation.

Even if a loved one lives out of Washington County, we can still help. HSI Resources for ElderCare is a proud member of *ElderCare Partners*. *ElderCare Partners* brings together the senior services expertise of six of the Twin Cities area's most respected nonprofit organizations.

In partnership with Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, Catholic Charities, DARTS - Dakota Area Resources and Transportation for Seniors, Senior Community Services and Volunteers of America, ElderCare offers comprehensive, personalized advice on senior options in the seven county metro area.

Services provided by *Resources for ElderCare* include:

- Adult Day Program
- In-Home Assisted Living
- Care Management
- Home Health Care
- Homemaking Services
- Home Share
- Information & Assistance
- Meals on Wheels
- Vial of Life
- Volunteer Peer Counselor
- Volunteer Senior Companion

You can count on us, now and in the future. **By calling just one number (651) 275-1910 you can receive the help you need!**

**HSI's mission is to help people overcome and prevent life impairments by developing individual potential and promoting meaningful participation in family and community life.**