

Normal Aging vs. Alzheimer's: What's the Difference?

It's completely normal to notice some changes in memory as people get older. Maybe it takes a little longer to remember a name, or maybe someone walks into a room and forgets why they went there. That can be frustrating, but in many cases, it's just part of normal aging. Alzheimer's is different. It isn't simply "getting older." It is a disease that affects the brain and gradually changes a person's memory, thinking, and ability to manage everyday life.

With normal aging, small memory slips can happen from time to time. A person might misplace their glasses, forget the name of someone they just met, or need a reminder about an appointment. Usually, the information comes back later, or they can figure it out with a little time. These kinds of changes may be annoying, but they do not usually stop someone from living independently, handling daily routines, or making decisions. Sources such as the National Institute on Aging and the CDC note that mild forgetfulness can be a normal part of aging, while serious memory and thinking problems are not.

Alzheimer's goes beyond occasional forgetfulness. A person may begin repeating the same questions, forgetting recent conversations, getting confused in familiar places, or having trouble following steps in a recipe they have made for years. Over time, Alzheimer's can also affect judgment, language, mood, and personality. The biggest difference is that Alzheimer's interferes with daily life and tends to get worse over time, while normal

aging changes are usually milder and more manageable.

A simple way to think about it is this: normal aging might mean forgetting where you put your keys but finding them after retracing your steps. Alzheimer's might mean finding the keys but not remembering what they are used for. Normal aging might mean needing more time to learn how to use a new phone. Alzheimer's might mean struggling to do familiar tasks that used to be easy, like paying bills, preparing meals, or recognizing a well-known route home.

It's a good idea to pay closer attention if memory changes start affecting safety, independence, or day-to-day functioning. Warning signs can include getting lost in familiar places, asking the same question over and over, becoming confused about time or people, or having trouble taking care of basic needs. These changes do not automatically mean a person has Alzheimer's, but they are worth discussing with a doctor. Sometimes other health issues, medication side effects, depression, sleep problems, or vitamin deficiencies can also affect memory.

The bottom line is that some forgetfulness can be a normal part of aging, but Alzheimer's is not. The key difference is how much those changes affect everyday life. If something feels noticeably different, it is always okay to ask questions and get support early. Speaking with a health care provider can bring peace of mind, help rule out other causes, and make it easier to plan next steps if needed.

The following table compares normal age-related changes with signs of Alzheimer’s Disease:

Normal aging	Alzheimer’s disease
occasionally forgetting things, such as appointments or names, but remembering them later on	forgetting information they have recently learned, asking for the same information repeatedly, or heavily relying on reminders such as notes or devices
sometimes misplacing items, such as glasses or the TV remote, but being able to retrace steps to find them	putting items in unusual places and being unable to retrace steps to find them
needing occasional help with tasks, such as recording a TV show or setting up a new device	difficulty carrying out everyday tasks, such as food shopping or driving to a familiar place
being confused about the day of the week but realizing later on	losing track of time and place, such as being confused about the passing of time or how they got to where they are
sometimes having difficulty finding the right word	experiencing difficulty following a conversation or joining in and having trouble finding the right vocabulary
experiencing an occasional lapse in good judgment or decision-making	having altered judgment and decision-making, such as decreased self-care or ability to handle money
sometimes feeling less interested in attending social events or get-togethers	withdrawing from other people, hobbies, and social activities
wanting to do things a set way and feeling irritable with disruption to routines	experiencing significant changes in mood and personality and possibly feeling distressed when out of their comfort zone
experiencing vision changes due to eye issues, such as cataracts	experiencing vision changes that may cause difficulty reading, balancing, judging distances, or driving
making occasional mistakes while managing bills or finances	decreased ability to develop and follow plans or work with numbers, such as keeping track of bills; difficulty concentrating or taking much longer to do things than previously

SASH EVENTS THIS MONTH

Days	Event	Time
Tuesdays & Fridays (except 6/19)	10 Minute Seated Strength & 15 Minute Seated Yoga Class- Join Amy in the 2 nd floor community room for a quick, easy warm-up before following a 10 minute seated strength class, ending with 15 minutes of seated yoga.	11am
Thursdays (except 6/11)	Activities with Dawn- Meet Dawn in the 2 nd floor community room, activities to be determined! Thursday 6/04 we will be making Bee Door Decorations: If you would like to know what they look like, there will be one outside of the SASH office!	3:15pm
Wednesday 6/10 & 6/24	Moover Shopping Trip- Please call the Moover to register if you would like to join the group (802)460-7433. Ask to talk to a dispatcher and let them know you would like to sign up for the Townshend Shopper and they will make sure you have all the information you need.	10:30am
Thursday 6/25	Food Bank- Truck usually arrives between 10:30a-11a. If you are interested in receiving a commodity box, talk to Amy in the SASH Office or call 1-800-214-4648 to apply. Fresh produce is available to all residents regardless of qualification for commodity boxes!!	Around 10:30am
Monday 6/08	DASH Diet Test Kitchen- The recipes we will be testing for National Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Month are White Bean, Spinach and Sun-dried Tomato Orzo, followed by Fakhfakhina (a middle eastern dessert that is a bit like a fruit salad or parfait).	3:00pm (2 nd floor community room)
Thursday 6/11	Documentary: The Secret of the Bees Part 1: It's National Pollinators Month, come learn about bees from this documentary created by National Geographic! 2 nd floor community room.	3:00pm
Friday 6/19	Summer Kick-Off Cook Out Quarterly Luncheon- We will be celebrating the arrival of summer with our annual cook-out. As always, we will have hamburgers, hot dogs and veggie burgers. Water, plates, utensils and condiments will be provided by SASH. Free for all residents!	12pm-1:30pm
Thursday 6/18	Blueberry Haus Ice Cream Truck- The ice cream truck is coming back- get your free dish or cone of home-made ice cream!	1pm-3pm

SASH Contact Information:
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ICE CREAM

WORD SCRAMBLE



1. ATNWEOERML _____
2. EOTLCHCAO _____
3. BCTOHEUSTRCT _____
4. YBREERULB _____
5. RWRSREYTAB _____
6. UUMGBBEBL _____
7. PNOATNLIEA _____
8. TRUTEB TPUNSE _____
9. VLALNAI _____
10. NOGGOGGE _____
11. PCHSIATIO _____
12. IUSONMP _____
13. TTEEUDRB NPCAE _____
14. TREBEAYR _____
15. AAANNB _____

