

What is the Difference Between Alzheimer's and Dementia?

Alzheimer's disease is one type of dementia. Dementia is the overarching umbrella term for types of mental and communicative impairments found in a variety of brain conditions and diseases. According to The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, dementia is a group of symptoms caused by disorders that affect the brain. It is not one specific disease.

Although there are multiple types of dementia, Alzheimer's disease accounts for around 70 percent of dementia cases. Other types of dementias or disorders that cause dementia include: Vascular dementia, dementia with Lewy Bodies, Parkinson's disease dementia, Huntington's Disease, Wernicke-Korsakoff Syndrome and Frontotemporal dementia along with other rare types.

TYPES OF DEMENTIA	CHARACTERISTICS
<p>Alzheimer's</p>	<p>Most common type of dementia; accounts for an estimated 60 to 80 percent of cases.</p> <p>Symptoms: Early symptoms include difficulty learning new information and/or remembering conversations, recent events or names. In addition, changes in language skills, lack of interest in activities and depression may also occur. Later symptoms include impaired communication, frequent disorientation and confusion, poor judgment, behavior changes, and eventually difficulty walking, speaking and swallowing.</p>
<p>Vascular Dementia</p>	<p>Resulting from damage to the brain caused by insufficient blood flow to the brain following a stroke or heart attack.</p> <p>Symptoms (can be temporary or progressively worsen): Symptoms vary by the location of the brain affected, but may include diminished attention, impaired judgment or ability to make decisions, plan or organize. Memory loss is not necessarily an initial symptom as with Alzheimer's.</p>
<p>Dementia with Lewy Bodies</p>	<p>Marked by unique symptoms that include fluctuations in confusion and clear thinking and may be associated with Parkinsonian-like motor changes.</p> <p>Symptoms: Early symptoms may include sleep disturbances, visual hallucinations, and muscle rigidity. Memory loss, thinking problems and psychiatric symptoms often follow.</p>

Continued on reverse.



<p>Parkinson's Disease Dementia</p>	<p>Parkinson's disease often results in a progressive dementia similar to dementia with Lewy bodies or Alzheimer's.</p> <p>Symptoms: Loss in memory, concentration and judgment, issues interpreting visual information, muffled speech, visual hallucinations, paranoia, depression and anxiety.</p>
<p>Huntington's Disease</p>	<p>A progressive brain disorder caused by a single defective gene on chromosome 4.</p> <p>Symptoms: Irritability, depression and mood changes, involuntary movements and an obvious decline in thinking and reasoning skills.</p>
<p>Wernicke-Korsakoff Syndrome</p>	<p>Often brought on by alcohol abuse, this is a chronic memory disorder caused by severe deficiency thiamine (vitamin B-1).</p> <p>Symptoms: Memory problems are the most obvious and severe symptom while other cognitive and social skills may seem unaffected.</p>
<p>Frontotemporal Dementia</p>	<p>A group of diseases in which nerve cells in the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain which control personality, behavior and language gradually deteriorate</p> <p>Symptoms: Changes in personality and behavior and difficulty with language.</p>

Sources:

Alzheimer's Association. (2015). "Types of Dementia." Retrieved from <http://www.alz.org/dementia/types-of-dementia.asp>

Alzheimer's Foundation of America (2015). "About Dementia". Retrieved from <http://www.alzfdn.org/AboutDementia/definition.html>

