

January – Alzheimer’s Awareness Month – Signs and Symptoms

Alzheimer's disease is a brain disease where brain cells progressively degenerate. The most common of a large group of disorders known as "dementias," Alzheimer’s disease causes deterioration in thinking ability and memory. It also affects behavior, mood and emotions, and the ability to perform everyday activities.

To help you know what warning signs to look for, the Alzheimer Society has developed the following list:

1. Memory loss that affects day-to-day function

A person with Alzheimer’s disease may forget things more often and not remember them later, especially things that have happened more recently.

2. Difficulty performing familiar tasks

A person with Alzheimer's disease may have trouble with tasks that have been familiar to them all their lives, such as preparing a meal.

3. Problems with language

Everyone has trouble finding the right word sometimes, but a person with Alzheimer's disease may forget simple words or substitute words, making her sentences difficult to understand.

4. Disorientation of time and place

But a person with Alzheimer's disease can become lost on their own street, not knowing how they got there or how to get home.

5. Poor or decreased judgment

A person with Alzheimer's disease may have decreased judgment, for example not recognizing a medical problem that needs attention or wearing heavy clothing on a hot day.

6. Problems with abstract thinking

Someone with Alzheimer's disease may have significant difficulties with such tasks, for example not recognizing what the numbers in the cheque book mean.

7. Misplacing things

A person with Alzheimer's disease may put things in inappropriate places: an iron in the freezer or a wristwatch in the sugar bowl.

8. Changes in mood and behaviour

Someone with Alzheimer's disease can exhibit varied mood swings -- from calm to tears to anger -- for no apparent reason.

9. Changes in personality

A person with Alzheimer's disease can become confused, suspicious or withdrawn. Changes may also include apathy, fearfulness or acting out of character.

10. Loss of initiative

A person with Alzheimer's disease may become very passive, and require cues and prompting to become involved.

If you would like to learn more about dementia, please come to the Co-operative Health Centre on Tuesday, January 27th at 10:00 am as Candace Uhlik from the Alzheimer Society will be doing a presentation.