

Down Syndrome and Alzheimer's Disease for Self Advocates

What is Alzheimer's disease?

Alzheimer's disease is an illness that affects the brain. It can make it harder to remember things, think clearly, or make decisions. Alzheimer's disease usually gets worse over time.



Why do you need to know about Alzheimer's disease?

Individuals with Down syndrome are living longer than ever. As you get older, you have a higher risk of getting Alzheimer's disease. This happens because the extra copy of chromosome 21 makes more of a protein called beta amyloid. When there is too much beta amyloid, it builds up in the brain and affects how the brain works.

What is being done to learn more about the connection between Alzheimer's disease and Down syndrome?

Researchers are working to better understand how Alzheimer's disease affects individuals with Down syndrome as they age, including studying new medicines that may slow memory loss; increasing participation of people with Down syndrome in these studies is essential to ensure treatments are safe, effective, and improve care, support, and long-term outcomes.*



Signs of Alzheimer's Disease*

Changes in Behavior



- You may act differently than you usually do, such as feeling angry or grumpy more often, or not wanting to do things you love to do.
- You may have more trouble doing things that used to be easy.

Difficulty Walking



- Walking may feel harder or less steady.

Memory Loss or Confusion



- You may forget things more often or feel unsure about where you are.

Trouble Communicating



- You may have a harder time finding the right words or explaining what you want to say.

Changes in Sleep



- You may sleep more, sleep less, or wake up often during the night.

Changes in Body Functions



- You may experience things like loss of bladder or bowel control (incontinence) or trouble swallowing.

New Seizures



- You may start having seizures even if you never had them before.

If you notice changes in yourself, tell someone you trust, like your doctor or caregiver.

**It's important to remember that these signs can be caused by other health conditions, not just Alzheimer's disease.*

How can you help your brain stay healthy?

You can take care of your brain by moving your body, eating healthy foods, and taking care of your feelings. NDSS has a program called **321go!**[®] that can help you learn fun ways to stay strong and healthy.

We can't cure Alzheimer's disease yet, but taking care of your brain is important because healthy habits can help keep your brain working well, may lower risk, and support a better quality of life as you get older. Keeping your brain healthy helps you stay active, remember things, and feel good.



Get good sleep.



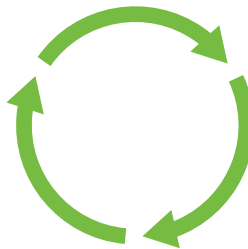
Stay active.



Eat healthy foods.



Spend time with friends and family.



Learn new things.

Down Syndrome and Alzheimer's Disease for Self Advocates

Key Things to Remember:



Individuals with Down syndrome can get Alzheimer's disease as they get older.



Alzheimer's disease affects memory and thinking.



Some medicines may help slow it down.



Research is important, and individuals with Down syndrome deserve to be included.



You are not alone. There are people who care about you and want to help.

You can learn more about ways to participate in research on the NDSS website: <https://ndss.org/research-program>.