



Living Better Series
Normal Aging vs Dementia
What is Brain Health?

What is Brain Health

“Brain health refers to the ability to remember, learn, plan, concentrate and maintain a clear, active mind.”

According to NeuroHealth Associates

Why Is Brain Health Important

- Dementia is the 6th leading cause of death
- 1 out of 8 Americans 65 and older have some form of dementia
- Almost half of people 85 and older have some form of dementia
- In 2018 the nation's estimated cost of dementia care is \$277 Billion
- The approximate lifetime cost of care for ONE person with dementia is \$341,840

What is Normal Aging

According to the National Institute on Aging

“Forgetfulness can be a normal part of aging. As people get older, changes occur in all parts of the body, including the brain. As a result, some people may notice that it takes longer to learn new things, they don't remember information as well as they did, or they lose things like their glasses. These usually are signs of mild forgetfulness, not serious memory problems”.

Precursor To Dementia

- Mild Cognitive Impairment
 - Impairment that can be noticed by others but does not effect lifestyle
 - People remain independent
 - Does not always progress to dementia

What is Dementia

According to the Alzheimer's Association

“Dementia is not a specific disease. It's an overall term that describes a wide range of symptoms associated with a decline in memory or other thinking skills severe enough to reduce a person's ability to perform everyday activities.”

Types of Dementia

- Alzheimer's Disease
- Vascular Dementia
- Mixed type Dementia
- Parkinson's Disease
- Lewy Body Dementia
- Frontotemporal Dementia
- Aids Dementia Complex
- Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus
- Alcohol/substance Abuse Related Dementia
- Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy

Normal Aging vs Dementia

Normal Aging	Dementia
Independent in activities of daily living	Dependent on others for activities of daily living
Complains of memory loss but able to recall details of when memory loss has occurred	Complains of memory loss if asked but cannot recall examples of when it occurred
The person is more concerned about the memory loss	The family is more concerned about the memory loss
Retains recent memory and conversations are not impaired	Conversations are impaired due to frequent repetitions
Occasional word finding difficulties, but usually able to retrieve the word	Word finding problems are frequent and uses substitute words or phrases
Does not get lost in familiar places, but may need to pause to remember the way	Becomes confused, even in familiar places, and may get lost for extended time
Able to use common appliances and able to learn new technology	Unable to work common appliances and unable to learn new technology
Interpersonal skills (typical for that person) are maintained	May become apathetic, depressed, socially inappropriate, and/or lose social filters
Performs in normal range on mental status exams	Abnormal results to mental status exams

Risk Factors for Dementia

Non-Modifiable Risk Factors	Modifiable Risk Factors
Age	Head Injuries
Family History	High Blood Pressure
Genetics: (specifically Alzheimer's)	High Cholesterol
Lack of Childhood Education	Mini Stokes (TIA)
	High Homocysteine Levels
	High Blood Sugar
	Poor Nutrition
	Chronic Stress
	Depression
	Social Isolation
	Sedentary Lifestyle
	Smoking

Reference

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