

# Understanding Dementia & Symptoms:



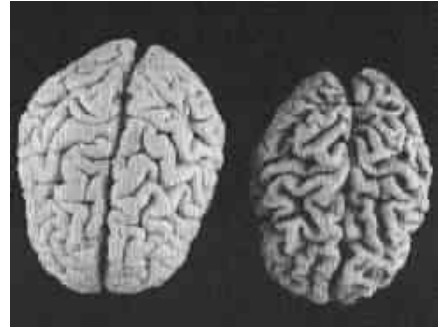
## What is Happening? & How to Help!

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## What is Dementia?

- ◆ It is NOT part of normal aging! It is a disease!
- ◆ It is more than just forgetfulness - which is part of normal aging
- ◆ It makes independent life impossible



### Dementia

- ◆ is an umbrella term that includes many cognitive loss conditions
- ◆ includes some reversible conditions - so should be checked out carefully

#### Alzheimer's Disease -

- ◆ is the most common type of dementia
- ◆ is caused by damage to nerves in the brain and their eventual death
- ◆ has a expected progression with individual variations - about 8-12 years
- ◆ will get worse over time - we can't stop it!
- ◆ is a terminal disease - there is NO known cure at this time!

#### Vascular Dementia (Multi-Infarct) -

- ◆ is caused by damage to the *blood supply* to the nerves in the brain
- ◆ is spotty and *not* predictable
- ◆ may *not* change in severity for long periods, then there are sudden changes

#### Lewy Body Dementia -

- ◆ problems with movement – falls & stiffness
- ◆ visual hallucinations & nightmares
- ◆ fluctuations in performance – day/day

#### Frontal-Temporal Dementias -

- ◆ Problem behaviors – poor impulse control
- ◆ Difficulty with word finding
- ◆ Rapid changes in feelings and behaviors

### Symptoms Common to Most Dementias... Over time...

- ◆ It affects a person's entire life...It causes the brain to shrink & stop working
- ◆ It steals memories - the most recent first, but eventually almost all...
- ◆ It steals your ability to use language ... leaves you with some 'skills'
- ◆ It steals your ability to understand what others mean & say
- ◆ It steals reasoning and logic
- ◆ It robs you of relationships
- ◆ It makes even the 'familiar' seem odd and scary
- ◆ It steals your ability to care for yourself and move around safely
- ◆ It robs you of impulse control - takes away emotional and mood control

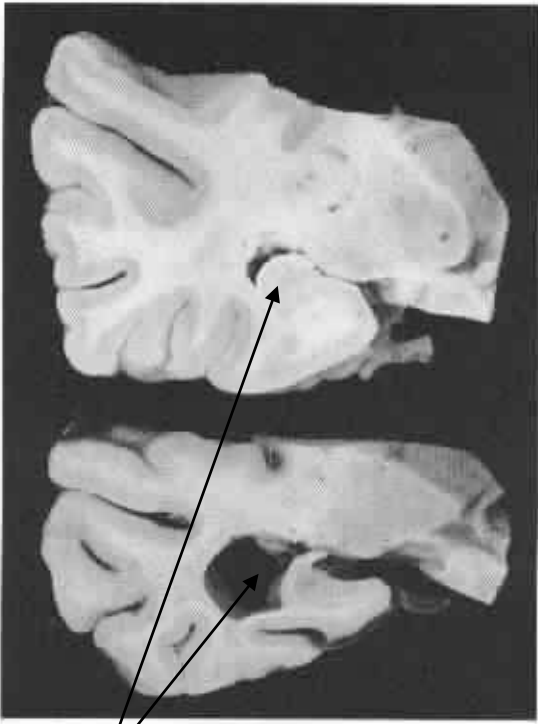
#### Drug Treatment for Alzheimers

- ◆ Drugs to improve chemicals in the brain so nerve activity might happen
- ◆ Drugs to treat depression
- ◆ Drugs to control distressing hallucinations, severe paranoia, or unprovoked violence
- ◆ No vaccines or cures...yet
- ◆ No way to stop the disease...yet

#### Prevention –

- Have a good family history for staying alert and 'with it' – genetics do play a part
  - ◆ Eat healthy & moderately (Heart-Smart)
  - ◆ Exercise your body --- 100 minutes/wk \*\*\*
  - ◆ Exercise your brain --- challenge yourself
  - ◆ Eat fish --- 1 time a week
  - ◆ Control your BP & sugar & weight
- \*\* consult your MD first

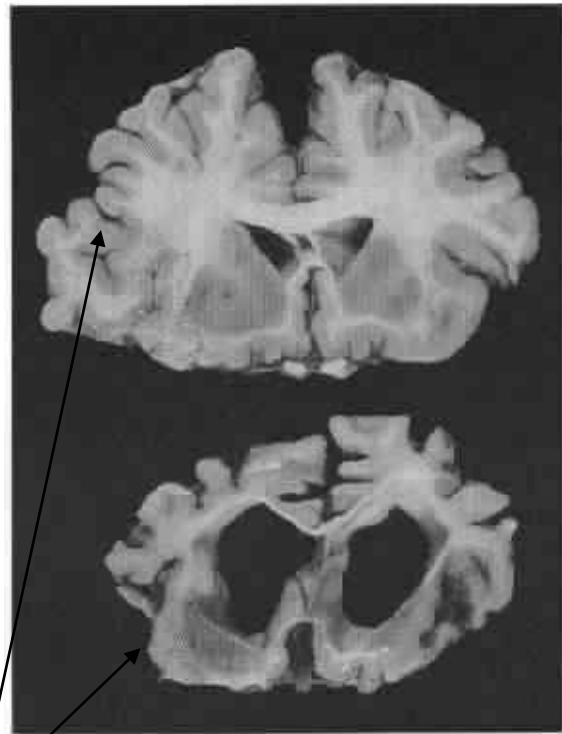
Normal



Alzheimer

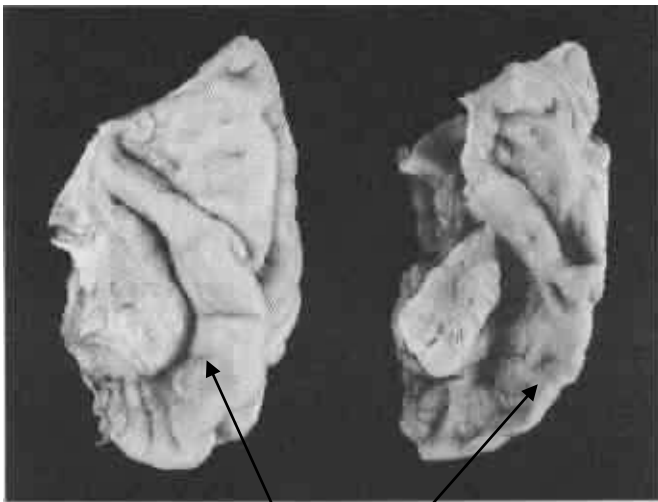
*The ability to remember information...*

Normal



Alzheimer

*The ability to use words and language...*

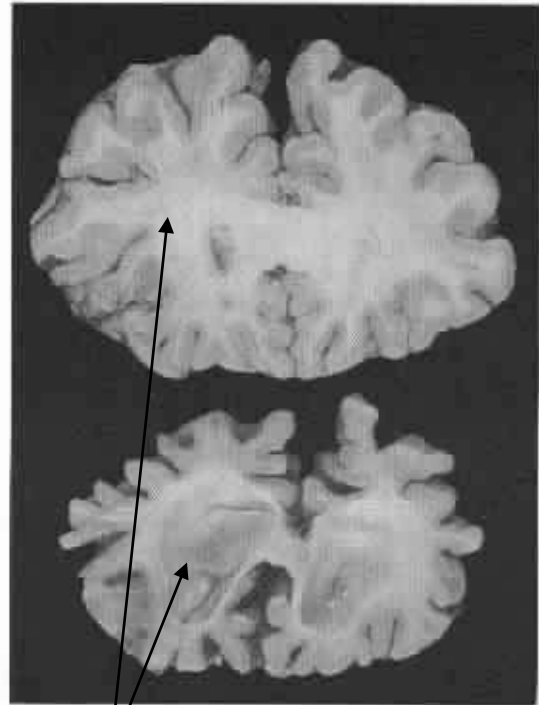


Normal

Alzheimer

*The ability to understand what is being said...*

Normal



Alzheimer

*The ability to control your impulses, temper, & moods...*

## **REALIZE ...**

*It Takes TWO to Tango ... or tangle...*

- By managing your own behavior, actions, words & reactions you can change the outcome of an interaction.
- Being 'right' doesn't necessarily translate into a good outcome for both of you
- Deciding to change your approach and behavior WILL REQUIRE you to stay alert and make choices... it is WORK
- It's the relationship that is MOST critical NOT the outcome of one encounter

As part of the disease people with dementia 'tend to' develop typical patterns of speech, behavior, and routines. These people will also have skills and abilities that are lost while others are retained or preserved.

### **Typically Lost – can't use**

#### *Memory skills*

- immediate recall
- short term memory
- clarity of time and place
- depth of categorical information
- relationships & specifics

#### *Understanding skills*

- interpretation of abstract meaning
- early - misses ¼ words
- later – misses ½ words
- subtle emotions, 'unspoken' agreements
- at the end – most words

#### *Language use skills*

- specific word finding
- descriptive abilities
- reading for content
- content of speech
- spoken communication
- words
- meaningful 'yes' and 'no'
- socially acceptable expressions of emotion
- verbal communication of needs and desires

#### *Emotional & Impulse control skills*

- ability to 'demand' respect
- ability to limit or control emotions
- ability to control impulsive speech
- ability to control impulsive actions
- don't act out when 'pushed'
- ability to keep private thoughts and actions in private places

#### *Motor Skills & Sensory Processing*

- at first very little as far as skills go
- later – initiation or getting started
- later – parts of tasks get left out/skipped
- mis-interprets sensory information
- organized scanning is lost
- visual field is restricted
- may become hypersensitive OR hyposensitive to touch, sound, light...

### **Preserved – can or may use**

#### *Memory skills*

- long ago memories
- emotional memories
- confabulation
- procedural memories
- awareness of familiar versus unfamiliar

#### *Understanding skills*

- 'gets' the concrete meaning
- picks out familiar or meaningful words
- covers well
- facial expressions that are consistent with the message being sent

#### *Language use skills*

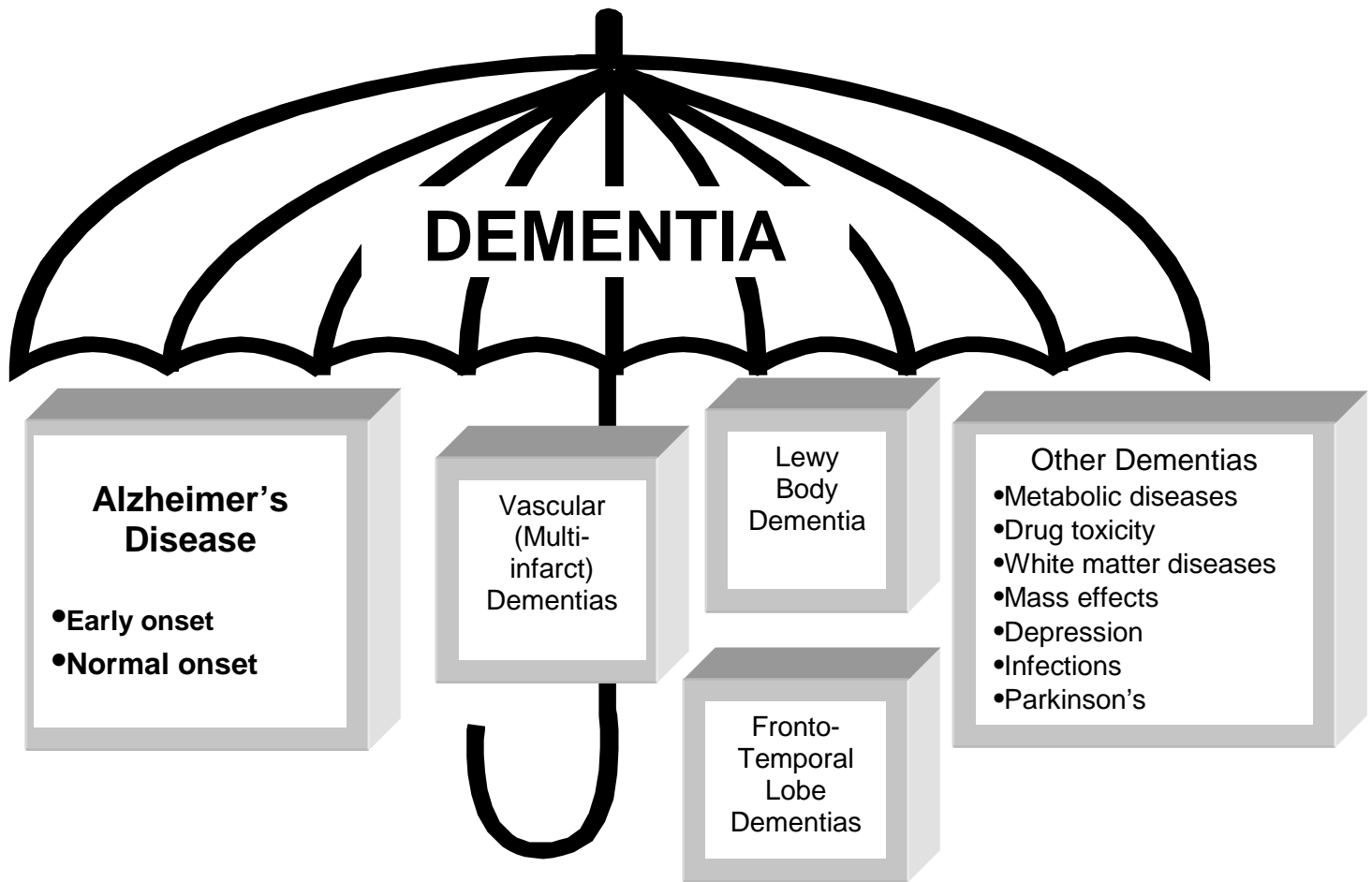
- desire to communicate
- ability to use hands or actions to describe
- reading aloud
- rhythm of speech
- para-verbal communication (how you say it)
- music and song
- automatic speech
- swearing, sex words, 'socially unacceptable' words
- non-verbal communication of needs and desires

#### *Emotional & Impulse control skills*

- desire to be respected
- ability to feel emotions and have needs
- say what is on your mind – with errors
- do what you want to do
- sometimes, feel badly after its done
- sometimes, behaving differently in 'public' if cues are strong

#### *Motor Skills & Sensory Processing*

- the movement patterns for pieces of tasks
- gross motor movements last longer than fine motor
- can often do the mechanics – BUT not safely or well
- looks for stuff – seeks out things
- mouth (lips, tongue), fingers and palms, soles of feet, & genitalia or 'private body parts'
- recognize faces, voices – familiar from not familiar



- Alzheimer's**
- New info lost
  - Recent memory worse
  - Problems finding words
  - Mis-speaks
  - More impulsive or indecisive
  - Gets lost
  - Notice changes over 6 months – 1 year

- Vascular**
- Sudden changes
  - Picture varies by person
  - Can have bounce back & bad days
  - Judgment and behavior 'not the same'
  - Spotty losses
  - Emotional & energy shifts

- Lewy Body**
- Movement problems
    - Falls
  - Visual Hallucinations
  - Fine motor problems
    - hands & swallowing
  - Episodes of rigidity & syncope
  - Nightmares
  - Fluctuations in abilities
  - Drug responses can be extreme & strange

- Frontal-Temporal**
- Many types
  - Frontal – impulse and behavior control loss
    - Says unexpected, rude, mean, odd things to others
    - Dis-inhibited – food, drink, sex, emotions, actions
  - Temporal – language loss
    - Can't speak or get words out
    - Can't understand what is said, sound fluent – nonsense words

## What is Normal and What is Not?

### Normal Aging Changes:

- Slower to think
- Slower to do
- Hesitates more
- More likely to 'look before you leap'
- Know the person but not the name
- Pause to find words
- Reminded of the past
- For you, it's harder than before...
- Prompts help! (reminders)
- You can learn NEW Things – It takes longer!

### Not Normal Aging Changes:

- Can't think the same
- Can't do like before
- Can't get started
- Can't seem to move on
- Doesn't think it out at all
- Can't place the person
- Words won't come – even later
- Confused about past versus now
- For you it's TOTALLY DIFFERENT
- Reminders DON'T Help!
- You can't hold onto NEW stuff

### Ten Warning Signs:

- 1 – memory loss for recent or new information – repeats self frequently
- 2 – difficulty doing familiar, but difficult tasks – managing money, medications, driving
- 3 – problems with word finding, mis-naming, or mis-understanding
- 4 – getting confused about time or place - getting lost while driving, missing several appointments
- 5 – worsening judgment – not thinking thing through like before
- 6 – difficulty problem solving or reasoning
- 7 – misplacing things – putting them in 'odd places'
- 8 – changes in mood or behavior
- 9 – changes in typical personality
- 10 – loss of initiation – withdraws from normal patterns of activities and interests

### What Could It Be... It Might NOT be Dementia

- Worsening of another medical condition
- Medication side-effect
- Unrecognized hearing loss or vision loss
- Depression
- Delirium from an acute illness
- Untreated pain – emotional or physical
- Other things...

**SO... Get it CHECKED OUT ... Carefully & Thoroughly**