

Is There a Difference Between Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia?

Yes. There is a difference between Alzheimer's disease and dementia. Dementia is the general word for a brain disease that causes a decline in memory, reasoning, and thinking skills. There are many different medical conditions that can cause dementia. Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia in the United States.

What is Dementia?

Dementia affects memory, the ability to make decisions, daily functioning, as well as mood and behavior. In some types of dementia, symptoms may begin as a problem remembering new information that slowly gets worse over time, causing problems with a person's ability to get through the day on their own. In other types of dementia, personality changes or behavior problems may begin before memory loss. Each type of dementia has different signs and symptoms. A person can have more than one kind of dementia at the same time.

Common types of Dementia Include:

- Alzheimer's disease (most common)
- Lewy body dementia
- Vascular dementia
- Huntington's disease
- Frontotemporal dementia

Dementia may also be associated with the following conditions:

- Parkinson's disease
- Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease
- Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) seen in athletes who have had many concussions.
- HIV/AIDS

For additional information please refer to the Virtual Health Library.

Have questions? Ask your doctor or health care provider at your next appointment.