



Enriching Lives

## A.C.T. NEWSLETTER

November

**National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month** –Alzheimer's is a progressive and fatal brain disease. Alzheimer's destroys brain cells, causing problems with memory, thinking and behavior. The deterioration of the brain cells is severe enough to affect work, lifelong hobbies or one's social life. As Alzheimer's progresses, there is a greater decline in an individual's functioning.

**General signs and symptoms of Alzheimer's disease.** Small change in memory is normal as we age. However, Alzheimer's disease is more than lapses in memory. Individuals with Alzheimer's experience difficulties communicating, learning, thinking and reasoning. These problems are severe enough to cause an impact on the individual's work, social activities and family life:

- **Memory loss.** A person forgets learned information and is unable to recall the information.
- **Difficulty performing familiar tasks.** People with dementia struggling with planning or completing everyday tasks.
- **Problems with language.** Individuals with Alzheimer's disease often forget simple words or substitute unusual words, making their speech or writing difficult to understand.
- **Disorientation to time and place.** People with Alzheimer's disease can become lost in a familiar place, forget where they are and how they got there, and not know how to get back home.
- **Poor or decreased judgment.** Those with Alzheimer's make bad decisions (i.e., financial).
- **Problems with abstract thinking.** Someone with Alzheimer's disease may have unusual difficulty performing complex mental tasks, such as problem solving or computing.
- **Misplacing things.** A person with Alzheimer's disease may place items in unusual places.
- **Changes in mood or behavior.** People with Alzheimer's disease may show rapid mood swings for no apparent reason.
- **Changes in personality.** They may become extremely confused, suspicious, fearful or dependent on a family member.
- **Loss of initiative.** A person with Alzheimer's disease may lose their desire to engage in pleasurable activities.

**Taking Care of Someone You Love with Alzheimer's.** Individuals with Alzheimer's can live a meaningful and productive life by engaging in activities they enjoy and by spending time with family and friends. Individuals coping with Alzheimer's disease are encouraged to do the following:

- **Care for their health.** Get regular checkups, take their medication, eat healthy foods, exercise every day, rest when they are tired, and drink less alcohol.
- **Coping with their feelings.** Write in a journal about their experiences and feelings. Join a support group. See a therapist. Share their feelings with their friends and family.

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