

What is Dementia?

Alzheimer's is the cause of 60-80% of dementia cases.

Vascular dementia is next most common.

It is possible to have a combination of types (Mixed dementia)

At least two of these must be affected:

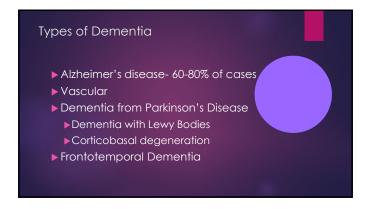
Memory
Language and communication
Attention, ability to focus
Reasoning and judgement
Visual perception (not the same as vision)

The Ten Warning Signs

Memory loss that disrupts your life
Problems with planning or problem solving
Difficulty doing familiar tasks at home or work
Confusion about time or place
Trouble making sense of visual images or spatial relationships

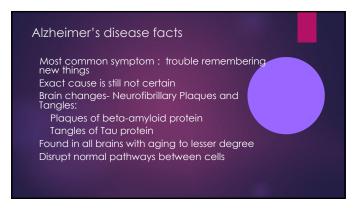
New problems with language, speaking or writing
Losing things and being unable to retrace steps to find
Decreased judgement
Social withdrawal, avoiding activities or events
Changes in mood and/or personality

## What's Normal?? Sometimes forgetting names, appointments, words Sometimes struggling with devices like electronics Losing things but being able to retrace steps Sometimes just not feeling like going out Getting frustrated when a routine is disrupted Vision changes with a medical cause







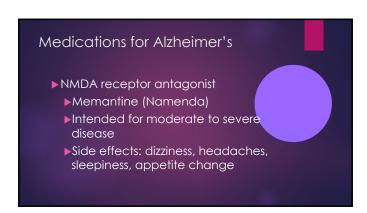




## Diagnosing Alzheimer's ► There is still no specific test, lab, scan ► Diagnosis is by a detailed history and exam ► Labs, scans such as CT or MRI are done to look for other causes ► Screening for depression may be part of testing ► Vision, hearing testing may be helpful

# Treatment of Alzheimer's Medications currently available are intended to slow the progression They may lessen symptoms in some people but do not stop the disease Meds will help some people and not others Meds may be helpful for other dementia types

## Medications for Alzheimer's Cholinesterase inhibitors Donepizil (Aricept), rivastigmine (Exelon), galantamine (Razadyne) Intended for early to moderate stages Side effects: nausea, poor appetite, agitation, sleep changes







### Caring for yourself

Eat right, sleep enough, and exercise Schedule "off" times and stick to them! If people offer to help, let them!

Do not feel guilty when you take time for

Don't ignore your own medical care.

### Talking to family and friends

- It's OK to ask visitors to abide by your loved one's schedule.
- ▶ Be cautious of people who sap your energy!
- ▶ If people want to do something, let them!
- Be aware that if you are talking in front of your loved one that they do hear you and understand
- ▶ Beware of Dr. Google

### Advance Care Planning

More than just Code Status and feeding tubes
Think of it as a road map for family when someone
is unable to make their own decisions.

It is never too early to start discussing

Capacity vs competence: persons with dementia may still have ability

to make medical decisions even if they no longer can manage affairs

POA should generally not overrule the wishes expressed by the patient

### Good sources for advance planning

- www.agingwithdignity.org/fivewishes
- www.caringinfo.org
- www.theconversationproject.org
- www.tn.gov/health- search advance directives
- www.nhpco.org/patients-andcaregivers/advance-care-planning
- www.nia.nih.gov/health/caregiving/advancecare-planning

### Caregiving during Covid CINDY MCCIAIN PEARMAN MD FAAFP FAAHPM HMDC MEDICAL DIRECTOR, UT HOSPICE/PALLIATIVE CARE SERVICES

### What is Covid-19?

- A virus from the coronavirus family, usually causes common colds
- ► Covid-19 is novel, meaning new to humans
- ▶ Since it is new, no one had immunity to it
- ▶ For reasons we don't know, this coronavirus causes much worse illness than most coronaviruses that cause common colds

### How is Covid-19 Spread?

- ▶ Usually by droplets in the air, released when we breathe, talk, sneeze, cough, sing
- Other illnesses spread by droplet are strep throat, influenza, rubella (German measles), common colds
- We know that Covid-19 can also be airborne, which makes it much more contagious
- ▶This is like measles, chicken pox (varicella), tuberculosis
- ► Covid-19 is more likely to be airborne in places with poor ventilation, small closed spaces

### How else is Covid Spread?

- On surfaces, such as countertops, doorknobs
- ▶ This is NOT the most common way to be exposed though!
- ▶ How long does it live on different surfaces?
  - ▶ Plastics- up to 2-3 days
  - ▶ Stainless steel- up to 2-3 days
  - ▶ Cardboard, paper- up to 24 hours
  - ► Glass- up to 96 hours
  - ► Copper- up to 4 hours
  - ▶ Air- up to 4 hours

### Contagious period with Covid-19

- ▶ When do symptoms appear?
  - ▶ From 2-14 days from the time of exposure
  - ▶ This is why we must self-isolate for 14 days after exposure
- How long are persons contagious?
  - For persons with mild to moderate illness, usually 10-14 days from onset of symptoms
  - ▶ In severe illness, up to 21 days from onset of symptoms
  - Persons are contagious before they develop symptoms!

### What are the common symptoms?

- Fever or chills
- ▶ Cough
- ▶ Shortness of breath, difficulty breathing
- ▶ Fatigue
- ▶ Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- ▶ Sore throat
- ► Congestion, runny nose
- ▶ Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea

### Symptom frequency in adults

- ▶ Fever, cough, or shortness of breath- 93%
- ▶Fever-71%
- Cough- 80%
- ► Muscle aches- 61%
- ► Headache- 58%
- ▶ Shortness of breath- 43%
- ▶ Sore throat- 35%
- ▶ Diarrhea- 31%

### Less common symptoms

- ▶Nausea/vomiting-16%
- ► Abdominal pain- 12%
- ► Runny nose- 7%
- ▶ Other uncommon symptoms
  - ▶ Pinkeye, eye redness, eyelid symptoms
  - ► Confusion (but may be very common in seniors)
  - ► Coughing up blood



### Signs that a person needs emergency medical care \*\*\*

- ▶ Difficulty breathing
- ► Chest pain or pressure
- ▶ New or worsened confusion
- ▶ Inability to wake up or stay awake
- ▶ Bluish lips or face
- Notify 911 or the emergency department that you need help for someone with possible Covid-19

### What if a family member is sick?

- Keep in their own room if possible, keep door closed
- ▶ Separate bathroom if possible
- ▶ Keep room well-ventilated (tips to follow on this)
- ▶ Wear a mask yourself if possible
- ▶ Use disposable plates and utensils if possible
- ► Clean surfaces often
- ▶ Wash your hands a lot
- ▶ Wear gloves handling laundry and disposables

### What if I get sick?

- ▶ Have someone else do caregiving if possible
- ▶ Stay in a separate room, door closed
- ▶ Wear a mask at all times if you are in room with others
- Wash hands often, avoid touching common surfaces.
   Have someone else clean surfaces often.
- ▶ Separate bathroom if possible
- ▶ Disposable plates, utensils.
- ▶ Everyone will have to isolate at home even if they have no symptoms

### What are good cleaning agents?

- Look for active ingredients such as ethanol, hydrogen peroxide, or quaternary ammonium
- Dilute bleach solution is fine in well-ventilated areas- don't mix with other cleaners!
- Clean phones, tablets and other electronics with 70% alcohol wipes
- ▶ What about handwashing?
  - ▶ Soap and water, wash at least 20 seconds
  - ▶ Sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol (ethanol)

### What do I need to plan ahead for?

- ▶ Plan for who can help with caregiving if you are unable
- ▶Try to keep 14 day supply of non-perishable food/meds/supplies
- ▶ Know what pharmacies deliver
- ▶ Sign up for grocery delivery if possible
- Influenza vaccine/pneumococcal vaccine
- ► Call PCP to find out where to get Covid-19 testing done should you need it

### What about home health/visitors?

- ▶ Ask them their Covid-19 protocols
- Most health care agencies require daily temp checks and checklists for symptoms or exposures
- If your caregiver is self-employed, have an agreement that they will notify you of any exposures or symptoms
- ► Home health providers should wear masks, follow strict handwashing protocols. Consider having selfemployed caregivers wear a mask also.
- ▶ Notify any professionals if you might have been exposed

### Air quality for homes/offices

- ▶ Use high quality air filters (HEPA or MERV13)
- ▶ Use HEPA portable air filters if you have visitors
- Set the fan on the HVAC to "ON" in stead of "AUTO"
- ▶ Open windows for cross-ventilation if appropriate
- ▶ Run a humidifier, aim for 40-60% humidity
- ➤ You can get great tips for making your home safer at <u>www.covidstraighttalk.org</u> and www.epa.gov/coronavirus

### Long-term care facilities

- Most do not allow visitors inside building unless the person is near death
- Some allow porch/ window visits. Most will assist with virtual (Facetime) visits and phone calls
- All facilities require strict testing and screening of employees and essential visitors
- ▶Some facilities are testing the residents also
- Residents who are ill should quarantine in their room

### Long-term care facilities

- Ask the facility how they can assist with phone/vide
- ▶ Try to schedule these ahead of time
- Try to keep your visits upbeat and positive
- Be assured most care homes are working hard to meet emotional needs of these residents during the difficult time.
- ▶ If you are able to make porch or window visits, do not come if you are sick or have been exposed!
- ▶ Wear your mask at all times if visiting.

### What about the hospital?

- ▶ For non-Covid admissions, all area hospitals are allowing 1 essential visitor
- ▶ If the person is near death, more than 1 visitor may be allowed
- Visitors must wear masks, have temp check, and pass screening questions
- ▶ For covid-19 admissions, usually no visitors are allowed until the person is past the contagious period
- If we get into a surge, these quidelines may change, but will be the same for all hospitals

### Hospital, continued...

- ▶ If staying with your loved one at the hospital
  - ▶ Wear your mask
  - ▶ Wash your hands often
  - ▶ Avoid going to other areas of the hospital
  - ▶ Do not go if you are sick or have been exposed
- ▶ If unable to go to the hospital
  - ► Give your contact info to the floor nurses
  - ▶ Ask nursing staff to assist with phone calls
  - ▶ Ask nursing staff to post your contact info
  - Ask what times are best to call to check in

### Tips for coping with stress

- ▶ Have a daily routine!
- ▶ Try to eat regular meals and get enough sleep
- Limit news broadcasts when your loved one is present.
- Consider using this time for legacy activities: making scrapbooks, going through old photos, recording you loved one telling stories or answering questions about the past
- ▶ Allow trusted friends, relatives, or paid caregivers to assist so that you have some time for your own needs
- ▶ Reach out to others for support!





