



# 7 Clinical Stages of Alzheimer's

Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia, a neurological brain disorder that causes problems with memory.



FISHER CENTER FOR  
ALZHEIMER'S  
RESEARCH FOUNDATION

The Seven Clinical Stages of Dementia, also known as the Global Deterioration Scale (GDS), was developed by Dr. Barry Reisberg, Director of the Fisher Alzheimer's Disease Education and Research program at NYU Grossman School of Medicine. This guideline is used by professionals and caregivers around the world to identify what stage of the disease a person is in. Stages 1-3 are the pre-dementia stages; stages 4-7 are the dementia stages. Stage 5 is the point where a person can no longer live without assistance.



## **STAGE 1** NO DEMENTIA SEEN

The person may appear to be free of subjective symptoms of cognitive and functional decline, as well as behavioral and mood changes associated with the disease; however, dementia may start in the brain decades before symptoms are noticeable.



## STAGE 2

### SUBJECTIVE MEMORY LOSS AGE RELATED FORGETFULNESS

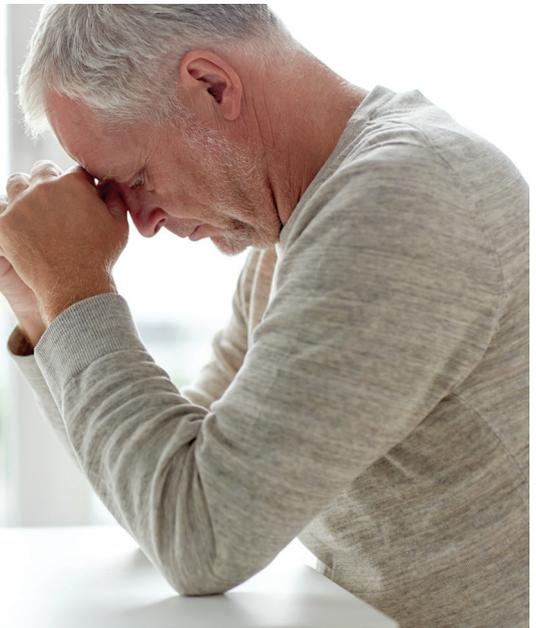


Although the person performs well on memory tests, they believe their ability to recall names or remember where they have placed things is declining.

## STAGE 3

### MILD COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT

The person begins to show subtle changes in concentration, thinking, comprehension, or memory—which may be noticeable by family and friends. They may begin to repeat statements, and there is a decline in their work performance if they are still working.



## STAGE 4

### MODERATE COGNITIVE DECLINE MILD DEMENTIA

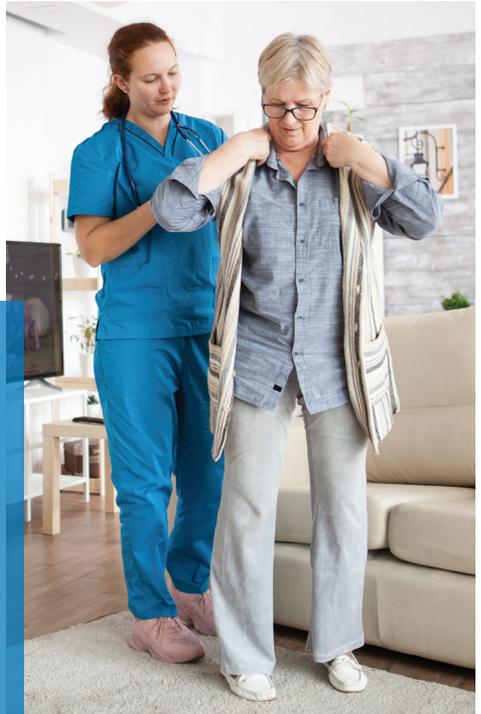
The person's cognitive deficits are more pronounced, and several of their functions are affected. They have poor short-term memory, and frequently have difficulty with managing their personal finances.



## STAGE 5

### MODERATELY SEVERE COGNITIVE DECLINE MODERATE DEMENTIA

The person may no longer have the ability to live independently. They may exhibit the inability to recall very familiar information such as their phone number or many years, close relatives or close friend's names, and may have difficulty selecting proper clothing for the season.

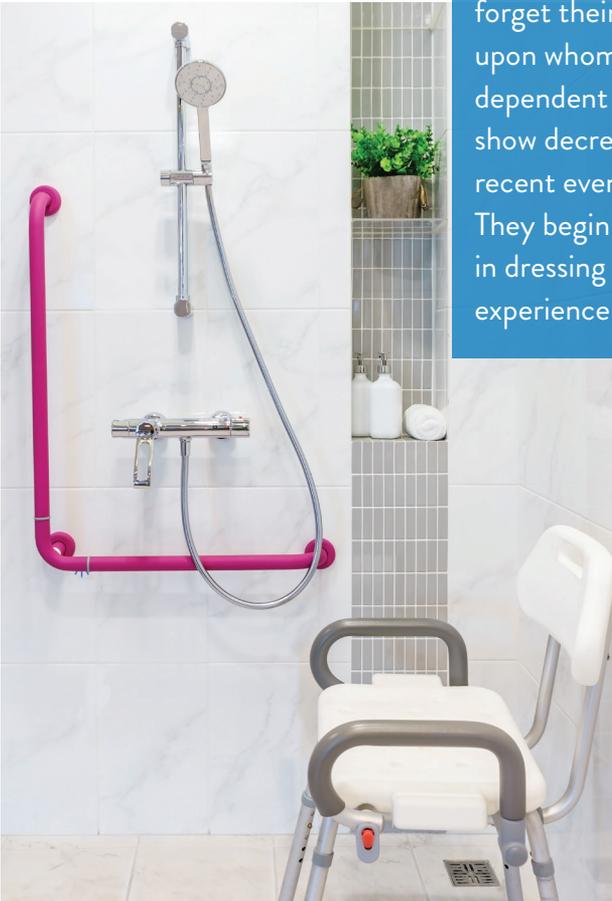


## STAGE 6

## SEVERE COGNITIVE DECLINE MODERATELY SEVERE DEMENTIA



The person's personality and emotions change. They may forget their spouse's name upon whom they are entirely dependent for survival. They may show decreased knowledge of recent events and life experience. They begin to require assistance in dressing and bathing, and may experience incontinence.



## STAGE 7

### VERY SEVERE COGNITIVE DECLINE SEVERE DEMENTIA

The person is in the final stage of dementia and will need constant care with all daily activities. Early in this stage they may be able to speak a half-dozen intelligible words. As this stage progresses, physical motor skills are compromised to the point where the person can no longer walk independently. Later they lose the ability to sit up and to smile.

This disease can affect anyone. It is imperative that when a diagnosis is given, efforts are made to obtain as much information as possible for care and support. With proper care, the person with dementia can remain content.



For more detailed information about the  
7 Clinical Stages of Alzheimer's go to:  
[alzinfo.org/understand-alzheimers](http://alzinfo.org/understand-alzheimers)

# Progression of the 7 Clinical Stages of Alzheimer's



<b>Stage 1:</b> No Dementia Seen . . . . .	Normal
<b>Stage 2:</b> Subjective Memory Loss . . . . .	15 years*
<b>Stage 3:</b> Mild Cognitive Impairment . . . . .	7 years*
<b>Stage 4:</b> Moderate Cognitive Decline . . . . .	2 years*
<b>Stage 5:</b> Moderately Severe Cognitive Decline . . . . .	1.5 years*
<b>Stage 6:</b> Severe Cognitive Decline . . . . .	2.5 years*
<b>Stage 7:</b> Very Severe Cognitive Decline . . . . .	7 years*

\*Approximate years are based on healthy persons

**EVERY**  
  
**65**  
**SECONDS**  
 someone in the U.S. develops  
 Alzheimer's disease

In the U.S. alone, more than 11 million patients receive care from unpaid loved ones who help with feeding, dressing, bathing, administering medications, and other activities of daily living.



**MORE THAN 6 MILLION AMERICANS ARE LIVING WITH ALZHEIMER'S TODAY**



FISHER CENTER FOR  
**ALZHEIMER'S**  
RESEARCH FOUNDATION

FDR Station, PO Box 220  
New York, NY 10150

1.800.ALZ.INFO  
(1.800.259.4636)  
1.212.915.1328

Email: [info@alzinfo.org](mailto:info@alzinfo.org)  
Website: [alzinfo.org](http://alzinfo.org)



*Together  
We Can End Alzheimer's*

## FOLLOW US ON



[/alzresearch](https://www.facebook.com/alzresearch)



[/fishercenter](https://twitter.com/fishercenter)



[/alzinfo](https://www.instagram.com/alzinfo)



[/company/fishercenter](https://www.linkedin.com/company/fishercenter)



We are the proud recipient of  
Charity Navigator's highest 4-Star ranking  
and Guide Star's Gold Seal of Transparency

