

# Now What?

## Next Steps After an Alzheimer's Diagnosis

A diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease can be difficult, but getting accurate information and support can help you know what to expect and what to do next. Use this checklist to help you get started.



National Institute  
on Aging

### Learn about Alzheimer's disease

Being informed will help you know what to expect as the disease progresses. Here are some resources:

- ✓ **Alzheimer's and related Dementias Education and Referral (ADEAR) Center**  
[www.alzheimers.gov](http://www.alzheimers.gov) | 800-438-4380
- ✓ **Alzheimer's Association**  
[www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org) | 800-272-3900

- ✓ **Alzheimer's Foundation of America**  
<https://alzfdn.org> | 866-232-8484

- ✓ Local hospitals and community centers may have educational programs about Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

### Get regular medical care

- ✓ Make regular appointments with your primary care doctor or specialist (neurologist, neuropsychiatrist, geriatric psychiatrist).  
[www.nia.nih.gov/health/doctor-patient-communication/talking-with-your-doctor](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/doctor-patient-communication/talking-with-your-doctor)

- ✓ Consider going to a memory disorders clinic. Ask your doctor for a referral if desired.

### Find local services and support

- ✓ Find local services by contacting Eldercare Locator  
<https://eldercare.acl.gov> | 800-677-1116
- ✓ Contact your local Alzheimer's Disease Research Center  
[www.nia.nih.gov/health/alzheimers-disease-research-centers](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/alzheimers-disease-research-centers)

- ✓ Find local chapters, organizations, and support groups:
  - Alzheimer's Association  
[www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org) | 800-272-3900
  - Alzheimer's Foundation of America  
<https://alzfdn.org> | 866-232-8484

### Do some legal, financial, and long-term care planning

- ✓ Get information to help you plan.  
[www.nia.nih.gov/health/legal-and-financial-planning-people-alzheimers](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/legal-and-financial-planning-people-alzheimers)
- ✓ Prepare or update your will, living will, health care power of attorney, and financial power of attorney. To find a lawyer, contact your local bar association or the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys.  
[www.naela.org](http://www.naela.org)

- ✓ Learn about care you may need in the future and how to pay for it.  
<https://longtermcare.acl.gov>
- ✓ Explore getting help to pay for medicines, housing, transportation, and more.  
[www.benefitscheckup.org](http://www.benefitscheckup.org)

### Get help as needed with day-to-day tasks

- ✓ Use simple memory aids like a notepad or sticky notes to jot down reminders, a pillbox to keep medications organized, and a calendar to record appointments.
- ✓ Ask family members or friends or find local services to help with routine tasks, such as cooking, paying bills, transportation, or shopping.

- ✓ Consider using technology solutions for medication management, safety (e.g., emergency response, door alarms), and other care.
- ✓ See tips about coping daily, changes in relationships, and more.  
[www.nia.nih.gov/health/alzheimers/caregiving](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/alzheimers/caregiving)

## Be safe at home

- ✓ Get home-safety tips.  
[www.nia.nih.gov/health/home-safety-checklist-alzheimers-disease](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/home-safety-checklist-alzheimers-disease)
- ✓ Ask your doctor to order a home-safety evaluation and recommend a home health care agency to conduct it. Medicare may cover the cost.
- ✓ Consider wearing a medical ID bracelet or necklace in case you get lost or need help, or joining the MedicAlert and Alzheimer's Association's Wandering Support program.  
[www.medicalert.org/alz](http://www.medicalert.org/alz)

## Stay safe on the road

- ✓ Talk with your doctor if you become confused, get lost, or need lots of help with directions, or if others worry about your driving.
- ✓ Get a driving evaluation. Ask your doctor for names of driving evaluators, or visit the American Occupational Therapy Association.  
[https://myaota.aota.org/driver\\_search](https://myaota.aota.org/driver_search)

- ✓ Learn about driving safety.  
[www.nia.nih.gov/health/driving-safety-and-alzheimers-disease](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/driving-safety-and-alzheimers-disease)

## Consider participating in a clinical trial

- ✓ Ask your doctor about trials or studies.
- ✓ Contact an Alzheimer's Disease Research Center for assessment and potential research opportunities.
- ✓ Search for a clinical trial or study near you or that you could participate in remotely:
  - NIA Clinical Trials Finder  
[www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers/clinical-trials](http://www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers/clinical-trials)

- ✓ Learn more about clinical trials:
  - NIA Clinical Trials Information  
[www.nia.nih.gov/health/clinical-trials](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/clinical-trials)
  - National Institutes of Health  
[www.nih.gov/health-information/nih-clinical-research-trials-you](http://www.nih.gov/health-information/nih-clinical-research-trials-you)

## Stay healthy

- ✓ Be active! Getting exercise helps people with Alzheimer's feel better and helps keep their muscles, joints, and heart in good shape.  
[www.nia.nih.gov/health/exercise-physical-activity](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/exercise-physical-activity)

- ✓ Eat a well-balanced diet that includes fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.  
[www.nia.nih.gov/health/healthy-eating](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/healthy-eating)
- ✓ Continue to enjoy visits with family and friends, hobbies, and outings.

## If you live alone

- ✓ Identify someone who can visit you regularly and be an emergency contact.
- ✓ If you are at risk of falling, order an emergency response system. A special pendant or bracelet lets you summon help if you fall and can't reach the phone.
- ✓ Consider working with an occupational therapist. This person can teach you ways to stay independent. Ask your doctor for more information.

- ✓ Stick with familiar places, people, and routines. Simplify your life.
- ✓ Get tips about self-care, safety, staying connected, and more.  
[www.nia.nih.gov/health/tips-living-alone-early-stage-dementia](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/tips-living-alone-early-stage-dementia)

## If you are working

- ✓ If you have problems performing your job, consider reducing your hours or switching to a less demanding position.
- ✓ Consider consulting your employer's HR department or employee assistance program about family leave, disability benefits, and other employee benefits.

- ✓ Find out if you qualify for Social Security disability benefits through "compassionate allowances."  
[www.ssa.gov/compassionateallowances](http://www.ssa.gov/compassionateallowances)  
**800-772-1213**