

Discussion Guide

Questions to Ask Your Clinician About Alzheimer's Disease

Before you go

Write down any changes you or the people around you have noticed, when they began, and whether they are getting worse. Some examples could be:

- ☐ Asking the same questions over and over
- ☐ Frequently forgetting important events or dates
- ☐ Relying on friends or family to do tasks you used to do on your own
- ☐ Difficulty managing regular tasks like cooking, paying bills or remembering how to use an appliance
- ☐ Getting lost in familiar areas
- ☐ Struggling to find the right words in everyday conversation
- ☐ Mood changes
- ☐ Withdrawing from social activities

Prepare a list of any medical conditions and all medications you take, including over-the-counter drugs, vitamins and supplements. Also note if a parent, sibling or other close relative has or had Alzheimer's disease.

You can ask a trusted family member or friend to come with you to the appointment too. They can be your advocate, listening to the conversation, taking notes, reminding you of certain issues and asking questions on your behalf, if you'd like.

While you're your appointment

Speaking with a clinician about your concerns can be overwhelming because there's so much to remember and you're already worried about your memory — that's why you have the appointment. You or your companion can take notes, or you might want to record the meeting, with the clinician's permission. This way, you can listen again to see if there's something you missed or perhaps misunderstood.

If you're interested in having a cognitive assessment, you can request one from your clinician. Unfortunately, some people, even in the medical community, can be quick to brush off memory concerns as a part of aging, especially for women going through [menopause](#). If you're concerned that your clinician is doing this, you can explain why you want an assessment and request that they formally evaluate you to see if it is just aging or it's something more serious.

Here is a list of questions that you might want to ask during your appointment, in addition to any of your own:

- ☐ What could be causing my symptoms? Could they be related to any of the medications or supplements I take?
- ☐ Could my memory problems be the result of poor sleep, depression, hearing loss or another treatable problem?
- ☐ How will you assess me? What memory and thinking tests will you use? Do I need blood tests or brain scans?
- ☐ Do I need a referral to a specialist, like a neurologist, geriatrician or memory clinic?
- ☐ If I do have tests, how long will it take for me to get the results, and when should we meet again?

After an Alzheimer's disease diagnosis

Even if you suspect that you might have Alzheimer's disease, hearing the diagnosis can be tough. However, you can still take control of certain aspects of your care by knowing as much as you can. This means asking even more questions, which could include:

- ☐ Who will be treating me?
- ☐ What changes might I expect in the future?
- ☐ Are there any treatments that might help slow down the disease?
- ☐ Am I eligible for the treatments?
- ☐ Are there any treatments for my symptoms?
- ☐ Are there any clinical trials I might qualify for?
- ☐ Should I make any lifestyle changes, like diet and exercise, that might support my overall health and possibly help slow down the disease progression at the same time?
- ☐ What resources are there for both me and those who will help care for me?
- ☐ What decisions should I make now, such as advanced directives or power of attorney?
- ☐ Is it safe for me to keep driving?
- ☐ What type of support might I need if I want to keep living at home?
- ☐ What are my next steps?