

# Next Steps After an Alzheimer's Diagnosis

Receiving a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease can be challenging. You may not know what to expect or what to do next. The steps below can help you get started.



## 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.nia.nih.gov/health/alzheimers-and-dementia](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/alzheimers-and-dementia)  
800-438-4380
- ✓ Alzheimers.gov  
[www.alzheimers.gov](http://www.alzheimers.gov)

- ✓ 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 and related dementias.

## Get regular medical care

- ✓ Talk with your doctor about what to expect, what treatment options may be available, and what decisions you need to make.  
[www.nia.nih.gov/health/medical-care-and-appointments/discussing-health-decisions-your-doctor](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/medical-care-and-appointments/discussing-health-decisions-your-doctor)

- ✓ Attend appointments with your primary care doctor and any recommended specialists.  
[www.nia.nih.gov/health/medical-care-and-appointments](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/medical-care-and-appointments)
- ✓ Ask your doctor for a referral to a memory disorders clinic.

## Find local services and support

- ✓ Find local services by visiting the Eldercare Locator  
<https://eldercare.acl.gov> | 800-677-1116
- ✓ Contact an Alzheimer's Disease Research Center near you.  
[www.nia.nih.gov/health/clinical-trials-and-studies/find-alzheimers-disease-research-center](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/clinical-trials-and-studies/find-alzheimers-disease-research-center)

- ✓ Find local organizations and support groups:
  - Alzheimer's Association  
[www.alz.org/local\\_resources/find\\_your\\_local\\_chapter](http://www.alz.org/local_resources/find_your_local_chapter)
  - Alzheimer's Foundation of America  
<https://alzfdn.org> | 866-232-8484

## Make legal, financial, and long-term care plans

- ✓ Get information to help you plan for the future.  
[www.alzheimers.gov/life-with-dementia/planning-after-diagnosis](http://www.alzheimers.gov/life-with-dementia/planning-after-diagnosis)
- ✓ Prepare or update your will, living will, health care power of attorney, and financial power of attorney. If you want to consult a lawyer, contact your local bar association or the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys.  
[www.naela.org](http://www.naela.org)
- ✓ Learn about how to manage your finances with Alzheimer's.  
[www.nia.nih.gov/health/legal-and-financial-planning/managing-money-problems-people-dementia](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/legal-and-financial-planning/managing-money-problems-people-dementia)

- ✓ Learn about long-term care you may need and how to pay for it.  
[www.nia.nih.gov/health/long-term-care/what-long-term-care](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/long-term-care/what-long-term-care)
- ✓ Explore getting help to pay for medicines, housing, transportation, and more.  
[www.nia.nih.gov/health/long-term-care/paying-long-term-care](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/long-term-care/paying-long-term-care)

## If you are working

- ✓ Consult your employer's human resources department or employee assistance program about family leave, disability benefits, and other employee benefits.
- ✓ If you work, consider your options. Learn more about Alzheimer's and employment.  
[www.brightfocus.org/resource/alzheimers-and-employment](http://www.brightfocus.org/resource/alzheimers-and-employment)
- ✓ If you have problems performing your job, consider reducing your hours or switching to a less demanding position.

- ✓ People with Alzheimer's may be eligible for disability income through private disability insurance, Social Security benefits, or veterans' benefits. Social Security's Compassionate Allowances program may help with speeding up a disability claim. Call 800-772-1213 for more information.  
[www.va.gov/disability](http://www.va.gov/disability)  
[www.ssa.gov/compassionateallowances](http://www.ssa.gov/compassionateallowances)

## If you live alone

- ✓ Find someone who can visit you regularly and be an emergency contact.
- ✓ People with Alzheimer's are at a greater risk of falling and should consider using an emergency response system. These systems use a special pendant or bracelet that lets you summon help if you fall and can't reach the phone.  
[www.nia.nih.gov/health/falls-and-falls-prevention/preventing-falls-home-room-room](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/falls-and-falls-prevention/preventing-falls-home-room-room)
- ✓ Contact an occupational therapist who can teach you ways to stay independent for as long as possible. Ask your doctor for more information.
- ✓ Get tips about self-care, safety, staying connected, and more.  
[www.nia.nih.gov/health/alzheimers-and-dementia/tips-living-alone-early-stage-dementia](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/alzheimers-and-dementia/tips-living-alone-early-stage-dementia)

## Explore ways to make tasks easier

- ✓ Use simple memory aids such as notes for reminders, a pillbox to organize medications, 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.
- ✓ Try using technology to help with medication management, safety (e.g., emergency response, door alarms), and other care.

## Be safer at home

- ✓ Learn more about home safety and get tips.  
[www.nia.nih.gov/health/safety/alzheimers-caregiving-home-safety-tips](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/safety/alzheimers-caregiving-home-safety-tips)
- ✓ 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 enrolling in the MedicAlert + Alzheimer's Association Safe Return program. Note that this service is not affiliated with the National Institute on Aging, and there may be a charge for this service.  
[www.medicalert.org/medical-conditions/alzheimers](http://www.medicalert.org/medical-conditions/alzheimers)

## Stay safe on the road

- ✓ Talk with your doctor if you become confused, get lost, take a long time to run a simple errand and can't explain why, or if others worry about your driving.
- ✓ Get a driving evaluation. Ask your doctor for names of driving evaluators, contact your state's department of motor vehicles, or visit the American Occupational Therapy Association.  
[https://myaota.aota.org/driver\\_search](https://myaota.aota.org/driver_search)
- ✓ Learn more about driving safety for people with Alzheimer's.  
[www.nia.nih.gov/health/safety/driving-safety-and-alzheimers-disease](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/safety/driving-safety-and-alzheimers-disease)

## Make healthy lifestyle choices

- ✓ Be active. Exercise can help you feel better, and it keeps your muscles, joints, and heart in good shape.  
[www.nia.nih.gov/health/exercise-and-physical-activity](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/exercise-and-physical-activity)
- ✓ Eat a well-balanced diet.  
[www.nia.nih.gov/health/healthy-eating-nutrition-and-diet](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/healthy-eating-nutrition-and-diet)
- ✓ Stay connected with family and friends.
- ✓ Participate in meaningful activities, such as hobbies or volunteering, to keep your mind active and engaged.

## Consider participating in Alzheimer's research

- ✓ Ask your doctor about clinical trials or studies you might be eligible to participate in.
  - ✓ Contact an Alzheimer's Disease Research Center about potential research opportunities.  
[www.nia.nih.gov/health/clinical-trials-and-studies/find-alzheimers-disease-research-center](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/clinical-trials-and-studies/find-alzheimers-disease-research-center)
  - ✓ Use the [Alzheimers.gov](http://Alzheimers.gov) Clinical Trials Finder to search for a clinical trial or study near you.  
[www.alzheimers.gov/clinical-trials/find-clinical-trials](http://www.alzheimers.gov/clinical-trials/find-clinical-trials)
- You can learn more about clinical trials at NIA's Clinical Trials Information page. To read stories about the impact of clinical trials, or to find a clinical trial near you, visit the NIH Clinical Research Trials and You page.  
[www.nia.nih.gov/health/clinical-trials-and-studies](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/clinical-trials-and-studies)  
[www.nih.gov/health-information/nih-clinical-research-trials-you](http://www.nih.gov/health-information/nih-clinical-research-trials-you)