

Did You Know: 5.9 million African Americans are *predicted to have Alzheimer's Disease by 2030?*

FACT SHEET

We need to talk about Alzheimer's Disease ¹

- Older African Americans are twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's Disease than older White Americans and are diagnosed at a later stage.
- 21.3% of African Americans 70 or older live with Alzheimer's disease.
- 80 percent of Black Americans say they face barriers to accessing quality health care and support, and half say they have experienced discrimination while seeking care.
- More research is needed to truly understand why African Americans are at higher risk of developing Alzheimer's Disease, and to assess how effective new therapies might be in slowing the progression of the disease within this high-risk community.

Why are African Americans more at risk for Alzheimer's Disease? ²

- Diabetes
- Hypertension
- Cardiovascular Disease
- High cholesterol
- Lack of education and resources
- Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome
- Socio economic factors
- Delays in seeking and receiving medical attention
- Underrepresentation in clinical trials

10 Early Warning Signs¹

Alzheimer's is a brain disease that causes a slow decline in memory, thinking and reasoning skills. There are 10 warning signs and symptoms. If you notice any of them, don't ignore them. Schedule an appointment with your doctor, follow up with them and do not be discouraged or let a doctor dismiss you and your concerns.

1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life
2. Challenges in planning or solving problems
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks
4. Confusion with time or place
5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships
6. New problems with words in speaking or writing
7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps
8. Decreased or poor judgment
9. Withdrawal from work or social activities
10. Changes in mood and personality

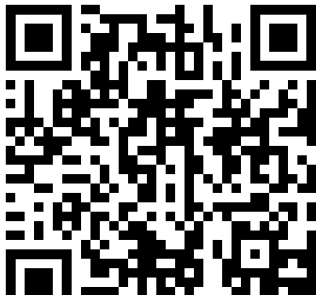
¹ Alzheimer's Association

² Alzheimer's Association

What is the difference between Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia?

- Dementia describes a group of symptoms associated with a decline in memory, language, problem-solving and other cognitive skills that affect a person's ability to perform everyday activities. Dementia is not a disease and cannot be “cured.”³
- Alzheimer’s disease is a degenerative brain disease and the most common cause of dementia.⁴ It is a progressive, destructive brain disease that not only affects memory and cognition, but also the senses, mobility, and robs a person of their dignity and self-esteem. Researchers and scientists are encouraged by drugs available on the market that can reduce the progression of Alzheimer’s Disease.

Scan here to watch



What can be done to reduce your risk of getting Alzheimer’s Disease?⁵

You can reduce your risk of Alzheimer's through lifestyle choices. Some specifics include prevention and management of high blood pressure, management of blood sugar, maintaining a healthy weight, not smoking, engaging in cognitively stimulating activities, and being physically active.

Meet Mollie and Ralph Richards

Mollie and Ralph Richards have spent the past 25 years dedicated to educating members of the African American community about Alzheimer’s Disease. Their aim is to help patients and caregivers in the African American and other communities manage the disease, and to encourage participation in clinical studies so that effective solutions and therapies can be identified and proven to work for the African American community more accurately reflecting the United States populations.

³ Alzheimer’s Association

⁴ Alzheimer’s Association

⁵ CDC

What can I do as a patient or caregiver to keep an eye on the progression of the disease?

Although African Americans have higher risks and instances of Alzheimer's Disease, there is a low level of awareness of the disease within the African American community, including its symptoms and progression and available treatments. In fact, 55 percent of African Americans believe that significant loss of cognitive abilities or memory is a natural part of aging.⁶ So, educating yourself and your family members about the disease is the first step. More information may be found here: [Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias | National Institute on Aging \(nih.gov\)](#)

If you have a history of dementia or Alzheimer's Disease in your family, consider joining a

longitudinal study that will measure your brain health over time, providing you with immediate warning signals, and providing researchers with much needed information to inform future therapies.

If you have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease and have been recommended drug therapy, consider joining an interventional research study. African Americans are currently underrepresented in interventional drug trials for many reasons, including a general distrust of the medical community. Yet scientists need this important data to develop and recommend the best therapies for African Americans and people of color specifically. More information about interventional research studies may be found here: <https://www.alzheimers.gov/clinical-trials>

Stay updated on Alzheimer's Disease, caregiver resources and support, advances in research and how to get involved!

The best way to break down barriers and build trust in African American community is first to acknowledge when there have been incidents where the African American community have been wronged in health care. We must acknowledge it and have conversations about it for us to have effective ways of moving past those issues. The second thing is that there have been times when the African American community has been a participant in health-related initiatives but felt left out once the initiative was over. You have to continue to engage the community becoming a part of the community.

-Robert Russell, MD, MBA

Educational resource sponsored by Memory Advocate Peers (MAP)

⁶ Alzheimer's Association