

# UNDERSTANDING ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

## Prevention, Risk Factors, Treatment, and Considerations for Living at High Elevation

Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia. While there is no cure, early awareness and healthy lifestyle choices can help support brain health and quality of life.



### WHAT IS ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE?



A progressive brain disorder that affects memory, thinking, behavior, and the ability to perform everyday activities.

#### EARLY WARNING SIGNS INCLUDE:

- Memory loss that disrupts daily life
- Difficulty planning or solving problems
- Trouble completing familiar tasks
- Confusion with time or place
- Changes in mood, personality, or behavior
- Misplacing items and being unable to retrace steps

### UNDERSTANDING RISK FACTORS

Many factors can increase the risk of Alzheimer's disease, especially as we age.



#### AGE

Risk increases significantly after age 65.



#### FAMILY HISTORY & GENETICS

A family history may increase your risk.



#### CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH

High blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, obesity, smoking, and physical inactivity can affect brain health.



#### HEAD INJURIES

Moderate or severe traumatic brain injury may increase risk.



#### SLEEP DISORDERS

Poor sleep quality and untreated sleep disorders may contribute to cognitive decline.

### STEPS TO SUPPORT BRAIN HEALTH

Healthy habits may help reduce risk and support long-term cognitive wellness.



#### STAY ACTIVE

Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity each week.



#### EAT WELL

Focus on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, nuts, and healthy fats.



#### KEEP YOUR MIND ENGAGED

Challenge your brain with reading, puzzles, learning new skills, and hobbies.



#### STAY CONNECTED

Remain socially active and engaged with family, friends, and community.



#### PRIORITIZE SLEEP

Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night. Address snoring or daytime fatigue with your doctor.



### LIVING AT HIGH ELEVATION AND BRAIN HEALTH

Big Bear's elevation of approximately 6,700 feet means lower oxygen levels than at sea level. Most healthy people adapt well. There is no clear evidence that living at this elevation directly increases the risk of Alzheimer's disease.

#### FOCUS ON WHAT MATTERS:

- Conditions that affect oxygen delivery to the brain—such as sleep apnea, heart disease, and lung disease—can impact cognitive health.
- Sleep apnea may be more pronounced at higher elevations. If you snore, gasp, or feel excessively tired, talk with your doctor.
- Keep your heart healthy, stay hydrated, and have regular checkups.

### TREATMENT OPTIONS

While there is no cure, treatments can help manage symptoms and maintain quality of life.



#### MEDICATIONS

Certain medications may help manage symptoms or slow disease progression in some individuals.



#### THERAPIES & SUPPORT

Cognitive therapies, structured routines, and memory aids can help maintain independence. Support groups and education help families and caregivers.



#### MANAGE OTHER HEALTH CONDITIONS

Treating conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, hearing loss, and sleep disorders supports brain health.



### WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR

Seek medical evaluation if you or a loved one experiences:

- Memory problems that interfere with daily life
- Changes in thinking, judgment, or decision-making
- Confusion with time or place
- Changes in mood, behavior, or personality

Not all memory concerns are caused by Alzheimer's disease. Many conditions are treatable, especially when identified early.



Small steps today can make a big difference for tomorrow. Take care of your body, stay connected, and seek care when concerns arise.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please contact your healthcare provider.



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