ALZHEIMER’S AND DEMENTIA
INFORMATION GUIDE

Litchfield Area
A SOCIAL GATHERING

WHERE PEOPLE
WITH MEMORY LOSS
AND THEIR CARE COMPANIONS
CAN COME TOGETHER
IN A SAFE, SUPPORTIVE
ENVIRONMENT.

First Saturday monthly at
10 -11:30 a.m.
Litchfield Public Library
216 N. Marshall Ave.
Litchfield
(320) 693-2483
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Alzheimer’s is not a normal part of aging although the greatest known risk factor is increasing age, and the majority of people with Alzheimer’s are 65 and older. But, Alzheimer’s is not just a disease of old age. Up to 5 percent of people with the disease have early onset Alzheimer’s, which often appears when someone is in their 40s or 50s.

Alzheimer’s has no current cure, but treatments for symptoms are available and research continues. Although current Alzheimer’s treatments cannot stop Alzheimer’s from progressing, they can temporarily slow the worsening of dementia symptoms and improve quality of life for those with Alzheimer’s and their caregivers. Today, there is a worldwide effort under way to find better ways to treat the disease, delay its onset, and prevent is from developing.

Alzheimer’s worsens over time. Alzheimer’s is a progressive disease, where dementia symptoms gradually worsen over a number of years. In its early stages, memory loss is mild, but with late-stage Alzheimer’s, individuals lose the ability to carry on a conversation and respond to their environment. Alzheimer’s is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States. Those with Alzheimer’s live an average of eight years after their symptoms become noticeable to others, but survival can range from four to twenty years, depending on age and other health conditions.

Alzheimer’s is the most common form of dementia, a general term for memory loss and other intellectual abilities serious enough to interfere with daily life. Alzheimer’s disease accounts for 60 to 80 percent of dementia cases.
TYPICAL AGE-RELATED CHANGES

- Sometimes forgetting names or appointments, but remembering them later.
- Occasionally needing help to use the settings on a microwave or record a television show.
- Vision changes related to cataracts.
- Misplacing things from time to time.
- Sometimes feeling wearing of work, family and social obligations.
- Making occasional errors when balancing a checkbook.
- Getting confused about the day of the week but figuring it out later.
- Sometimes having trouble finding the right word.
- Making a bad decision once in a while.
- Developing very specific ways of doing things and becoming irritable when a routine is disrupted.

Your memory often changes as you grow older. But memory loss that disrupts daily life is not a typical part of aging. It may be a symptom of dementia. Dementia is a slow decline in memory, thinking, and reasoning skills. The most common form of dementia is Alzheimer’s disease, a fatal disorder that results in the loss of brain cells and function.

“Is it Alzheimer’s or just signs of aging?”
Memory loss that disrupts daily life. One of the most common signs of Alzheimer’s disease, especially in the early stage, is forgetting recently learned information. Others include forgetting important dates or events, asking for the same information over and over, and increasingly needing to rely on memory aids or family members for things they used to handle on their own.

Challenges in planning or solving problems Some people may experience changes in their ability to develop and follow a plan or work with numbers. They may have trouble following a familiar recipe or keeping track of monthly bills. They may have difficulty concentrating and take much longer to do things than they did before.

Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work, or at leisure People with Alzheimer’s disease often find it hard to complete daily tasks. Sometimes they may have trouble driving to a familiar location, managing a budget at work, or remembering the rules of a favorite game.

Confusion with time or place People with Alzheimer’s can lose track of dates, seasons, and the passage of time. They may have trouble understanding something if it is not happening immediately. Sometimes they may forget where they are or how they got there.

Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships For some people, having vision problems is a sign of Alzheimer’s. They may have difficulty reading, judging distance, and determining color or contrast, which may cause problems with driving.

New problems with words in speaking or writing People with Alzheimer’s disease may have trouble following or joining a conversation. They may stop in the middle of a conversation and have no idea how to continue or they may repeat themselves. They may struggle with vocabulary, have problems finding the right word, or call things by the wrong name.

Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps A person with Alzheimer’s may put things in unusual places. They may lose things and be unable to go back over their steps to find them again. Sometime they may accuse others of stealing. This may occur more frequently over time.

Decreased or poor judgment People with Alzheimer’s may experience changes in judgment or decision-making. For example, they may use poor judgment when dealing with money, giving large amounts to telemarketers. They may pay less attention to grooming or keeping themselves clean.

Withdrawal from work or social activities A person with Alzheimer’s disease may start to remove themselves from hobbies, social activities, work projects, or sports. They may have trouble keeping up with a favorite sports team or remembering how to complete a favorite hobby. They may also avoid being social because of the changes they have experienced.

Changes in mood and personality The mood and personalities of people with Alzheimer’s can change. They can become confused, suspicious, depressed, fearful, or anxious. They may be easily upset at home, at work, with friends, or in places where they are out of their comfort zone.
10 WAYS TO LOVE YOUR BRAIN

Break a sweat.
Engage in regular cardiovascular exercise that elevates your heart rate and increased blood flow to the brain and body. Several studies have found an association between physical activity and reduced risk of cognitive decline.

Hit the books.
Formal education in any stage of life will help reduce your risk of cognitive decline and dementia. For example, take a class at a local college, community center, or online.

Butt out.
Evidence shows that smoking increases risk of cognitive decline. Quitting smoking can reduce that risk to levels comparable to those who have not smoked.

Follow your heart.
Evidence shows that risk factors for cardiovascular disease and stroke – obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes – negatively impact your cognitive health. Take care of your heart, and your brain just might follow.

Heads up!
Brain injury can raise your risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Wear a seat belt, use a helmet when playing contact sports or riding a bike, and take steps to prevent falls.

Fuel up right.
Eat a healthy and balanced diet that is lower in fat and higher in vegetables and fruit to help reduce the risk of cognitive decline. Although research on diet and cognitive function is limited, certain diets, including Mediterranean and Mediterranean-DASH, may contribute to risk reduction.

Catch some Zzz's.
Not getting enough sleep due to conditions like insomnia or sleep apnea may result in problems with memory and thinking.

Take care of your mental health.
Some studies link a history of depression with increased risk of cognitive decline, so seek medical treatment if you have symptoms of depression, anxiety, or other mental health concerns. Also, try to manage your stress.

Buddy up.
Staying socially engaged may support brain health. Pursue social activities that are meaningful to you. Find ways to be part of your local community. Or, just share activities with friends and family.

Stump yourself.
Challenge and activate your mind. Build a piece of furniture. Complete a jigsaw puzzle. Do something artistic. Play games. Challenging your mind may have short and long-term benefits for your brain.
WHAT TO KNOW IF SOMEONE CLOSE TO YOU HAS DEMENTIA

Helping your children or grandchildren:

- Talk openly about the changes you are experiencing because of your disease.
- Identify their emotional needs.
- Notify school social workers and teachers about your situation.
- Don’t pull away.
- Make it OK to laugh.
- Record your thoughts, feelings, and wisdom in writing, audio, or video.

For more information for Kids & Teens go to the website alz.org/Living with Alzheimer’s just for kids and teens

Helping your friends:

- Share your experiences living with Alzheimer’s.
- Tell them what you’re still comfortable doing.
- Invite them to Alzheimer’s Association education programs and events.
- Let them know when you need help and support – and what they can do to help.
  Then, when they offer, take them up on it!

Communication matters:

- Speak honestly and frankly about your feelings.
- Try to listen to the other person’s feelings.
- Focus on the positive changes you can make that might help you regain your sense of closeness with one another.
- Take action.
- When friends and family get stuck in the adjustment process, help by directing them to alz.org.
- If you or a family member is experiencing depression or anxiety that seems to go beyond what feels normal, talk to your doctor or provider to get the help you need.
See the doctor
Be sure to visit your physician regularly, and listen to what your body is telling you. Any exhaustion, stress, sleeplessness, or changes in appetite or behavior should be taken seriously. Ignoring these symptoms can cause your physical and mental health to decline.

Get Moving
- Take friend and family members up on their offers to help.
- You can get in a good workout in a short amount of time – even a 30-minute break.
- Start small
- While it is recommended that you get 30 minutes of physical activity at least five days week, even 10 minutes a day can help. Fit in what you can, and work toward a goal.
- Exercise at home.
- When the person with dementia naps, pull out a yoga mat and stretch, set up a stationary bike, or try exercise tapes.
- Find something you love.
- If you enjoy the activity, it will be easier to make it a habit.

Be active with the person with dementia.
- Take a walk together outside and enjoy the fresh air.
- Go to the mall and take a stroll indoors.
- Do seated exercises at home.
- Dance together to favorite music.
- Garden or do other routine activities that you both enjoy.

Eat well.
Heart-healthy eating patterns, such as the Mediterranean diet, are good for overall health and may help protect the brain. A Mediterranean diet includes relatively little red meat and emphasizes whole grains, fruits, vegetables, fish, nuts, olive oil, and other healthy fats. Try new recipes and involve the person with dementia.

Five tips to help you cope
1) Manage your level of stress.
Stress can cause physical problems and changes in behavior. Note your symptoms and discuss with a doctor, as needed. Try to find relaxation techniques that work for you.

2) Be realistic.
The care you give does make a difference, but many behaviors can’t be controlled. Grieve the losses, focus on the positive times as they arise, and enjoy good memories.

3) Know you’re doing your best.
Remember that the care you provide makes a difference and that you are doing the best you can. You may feel guilty because you can’t do more, but individual care needs change as Alzheimer's progresses. You can’t promise how care will be delivered, but you can make sure that the person with the disease is well cared for and safe.

4) Take a break.
It’s normal to need a break from caregiving duties. No one can do it all by themselves. Look into respite care to allow time to take care of yourself.

5) Accept changes as they occur.
People with Alzheimer’s disease change over time and so do their needs. They may require care beyond what you can provide on your own. Becoming aware of community resources and care options can make the transition easier. So will the support and assistance of those around you.

Caregiver support group meets on a monthly basis. Contact Barb Alsleben for more information.
Phone: (320) 221-3747
Email: Barbara.Alsleben@lssmn.org
BECOME A DEMENTIA FRIEND

Please join the Litchfield Area ACT on Alzheimer’s Dementia Champions in making the Litchfield Area more dementia friendly. Learn how you can attend a one-hour dementia friends information session filled with activities and discussion that cover the five key messages everyone should know about dementia.

Attention: Community members, businesses, community and service groups

Dementia Friendly @ Work

The ACT on Alzheimer’s Dementia Friendly @ Work training is a one-hour educational session for staff of business and service organizations, as well as other community settings. The training focuses on understanding dementia and taking action to create an environment that is safe, respectful, and welcoming for people living with dementia.

Training Objectives:

- Learn what dementia is and some Alzheimer’s facts
- Recognize the signs of Alzheimer’s
- Learn tips for communicating and interacting with a person who has dementia
- Learn tips for creating a dementia-friendly physical space
- Get familiar with resources in your community

More than 90,000 Minnesotans age 65+ are living with Alzheimer’s. It’s projected that Alzheimer’s cases and other dementias will triple by 2050. These numbers directly impact family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers, colleagues, clients, and customers.

To request more information in the Litchfield Area or learn how to schedule a information session:

ACTonalz@meekermemorial.org
LEAVING YOUR LEGACY

Now that you are living with Alzheimer’s, it becomes even more important for you to live your life in a way that will preserve the essence of who you are and make an impact in the areas that are most important to you. This positive effect on others becomes your legacy. Leaving a legacy can seem like such a grand idea. But, think about how you can make an impact and how your life has been touched by others who have come before you. The ways these individuals have touched your life is the legacy he or she has left you. These may be very simple things – what a person has taught you, created or given to you. It can be a skill passed on to you, or a different way of seeing the world that has become part of your core values.

Ideas for leaving your legacy:

• Creating a family tree that includes details about each person.
• Writing letters to grandchildren about your life. Share what you have learned and what you hope for them.
• Making photo albums for the important people in your life that give details of a wonderful time you had spending time together.
• Volunteering your time with an organization you believe in. One way you can volunteer with us is becoming an Alzheimer’s advocate. Your voice and efforts will help people with dementia have access to the care and support services they need to live their best life.
• Making family celebrations especially meaningful, such as a destination family reunion or theme party.
• Bringing back family traditions that have slipped away in recent years.
• Taking trips to places you have lived or visited, and sharing your experience with others.
• Nominating yourself for the Alzheimer’s Association National Early-Stage Advisory Group. Advisors are leaving their legacy by sharing their stories, raising awareness, and providing input for appropriate services and programs for others living in the early stage.
• Participating in Alzheimer’s research as a clinical trial volunteer is a great way to make a difference for future generations. Alzheimer’s Association Trial Match is a free service that matches people with trials in their area.
COMMUNITY SUPPORTS & SERVICES

LSS Senior Nutrition Program
Affordable, nutritional meals for seniors and their guests
(320) 693-6318
Litchfield Civic Arena, 900 N. Gilman Ave., Litchfield, MN 55355
lssmn.org/nutrition

Meeker Council on Aging
(320) 693-0194
218 N. Holcombe Ave., Litchfield, MN 55355

Meeker County Social Services
(320) 693-5300
114 N. Holcombe Ave., Suite 180, Litchfield, MN 55355

Meeker County Public Health
(320) 693-5370
114 N. Holcombe Ave., Suite 250, Litchfield, MN 55355

Meeker Memorial Hospital
Center for Senior Behavioral Health
320-693-4535
612 S. Sibley Ave., Litchfield, MN 55355
www.meekermemorial.org

Meals on Wheels
Hot, nutritious, and delicious hot meals served within Litchfield city limits
(320) 373-6624
218 N. Holcombe Ave., Litchfield, MN 55355
ectumenoflitchfield.org

EDUCATION

Litchfield Public Library
Books on Alzheimer’s and dementia.
(320) 693-2483
216 N. Marshall Ave., Litchfield, MN 55355
SENIOR LIVING SUPPORTS & SERVICES

Ecumen of Litchfield – Assisted Living
(320) 693-2430
203 N. Armstrong Ave., Litchfield, MN 55355
ecumenoflitchfield.org

Lakeview Ranch
Darwin (320) 275-4610 OR Dassel (320) 275-5515
69531 213th St., Darwin, MN 55324
22851 MN Hwy 15, Dassel, MN 55325
lakeviewranch.com

Lakeside Healthcare Center of Dassel
(320) 275-3308
441 William Ave. E, Dassel, MN 55325
lakesidecampus.org

Emmaus Place Apartments
(320) 693-2430
200 N. Holcombe Ave., Litchfield, MN 55355
ecumenoflitchfield.org

Gloria Dei Apartments
(320) 693-2430
218 N. Holcombe Ave., Litchfield, MN 55355
ecumenoflitchfield.org

Lincoln Apartments
(320) 693-2104
122 W. 4th St., Litchfield, MN 55355

St. Anthony Manor
(320) 764-5600
131 Church St., Watkins, MN 55389

Harmony River
(320) 484-6000
1555 Sherwood St. SE, Hutchinson, MN 55350
harmonyriverliving.org
TRANSPORTATION

Central Community Transit (CCT) and Veteran’s Van

Provides safe, reliable, and cost effective transportation to all residents of Kandiyohi, Meeker, and Renville counties. Volunteer drivers, using their own personal vehicle, transporting everyone over the age of 60.

(320) 693-2718
812 E. Ripley St., Litchfield, MN 55355
cctbus.org

CAREGIVER SUPPORTS & SERVICES

Lutheran Social Services

Dementia caregiver support group meets once a month.

(320) 221-3747
114 N. Holcombe, Room 130, Litchfield, MN 55355
barbara.alsleben@lssmn.org

HOME HEALTHCARE & HOSPICE

Divine Home Care

(320) 693-2580
201 S. Sibley Ave., Litchfield, MN 55355

Ecumen of Litchfield – Hospice and Home Care

(320) 693-7367
218 N. Holcombe Ave., Litchfield, MN 55355
ecumenoflitchfield.org

RESPITE CARE/ADULT DAY

Lake View Ranch

Darwin (320) 275-4610 or
Dassel (320) 275-5515
69531 213th St., Darwin
22851 MN Hwy 15, Dassel

Ecumen of Litchfield – Adult Day Services

(320) 373-6627
218 N. Holcombe Ave., Litchfield, MN 55355
ecumenoflitchfield.org

Hilltop Day Stop

(320) 764-2300
410 Luella St Watkins, MN 55389

SAFETY

Meeker County Sheriff’s Office – Project Lifesaver

(320) 693-5400
326 N. Ramsey Ave., Litchfield, MN 55355
LEGAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORTS & SERVICES

Lutheran Social Services
Budget counseling, debt and credit help, housing counseling, financial education, bankruptcy services, etc.
1-888-577-2227

Health Insurance Counseling – Request location or by appointment
Senior Linkage Line 1-800-333-2433

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL SERVICES

Alzheimer’s Association
24/7 Help Line.
1-800-272-3900
alz.org/mnnd

Senior LinkAge Line
Free statewide information and assistance service.
1-800-333-2433
minnesotahelp.info

ALZConnected
Free online community for everyone affected by Alzheimer’s or dementia.
1-800-272-3900
alzconnected.org

Alzheimer’s Navigator
Helps guide caregivers to answers.
1-800-272-3900
alzheimersnavigator.org

Community Resource Finder
Works on global, national, and local level to provide care and support for all those affected by Alzheimer’s and other dementias.
(320) 257-0699
600 25th Ave. S., Ste. 201, St. Cloud, MN 56301
communityresourcefinder.org

Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging (MNRAAAA)
A catalyst in building a community where seniors live with dignity, mutual respect, and shared responsibilities across generations and cultures.
(507) 387-1256
mnraaa.org

Veteran’s Administration Caregiver Support
1-855-260-3274

For more information, contact ACTonalz@meekermemorial.org
“Knowledge is power, our goal will be to increase our community’s awareness regarding Alzheimer’s and other related dementias, so we can better support and serve the people and their families impacted by the disease”

– Anne McKinley, MMH Center for Senior Behavioral Health Nurse Manger

Litchfield Area

For more information, contact ACTonalz@meekermemorial.org

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Litchfield Area ACT and
Meeker Memorial Hospital
Alzheimer’s Phase 4 grant project:
www.actonalz.org/litchfield