



The Dreaded “A”

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In the day of Hester Prynne, a dreaded “A” meant you were an outcast of society because of something that you did that was not acceptable to society. In today’s society there is a dreaded “A”, too. It has nothing to do with what a person does, but stands for a disease that affects thousands of seniors and their caregivers. Today’s dreaded “A” stands for Alzheimer’s disease.

Let’s take a look at some early warning signs of this disease.

1. Taste and smell changes. Although this is rarely reported it is one of the earliest signs. The taste buds begin to change and may lead to the changes in diet, or a decrease in the amount of food consumed. Sometimes the sense of smell disappears, also.
2. Personality changes. This can be mood swings, increased episodes of being easily aggravated, sadness or depression.
3. Antisocial behavior. This may be as simple as a withdrawal from friends.
4. Memory loss. This starts out simple but increases as the disease progresses. Short term memory is the first to go.
5. The inability to plan. The patient becomes too distracted or anxious to plan anything.
6. Loss of productivity. The patient loses focus or feels uninterested in anything.
7. The inability to problem solve. Something simple or routine becomes too difficult for the patient to master.

There are many theories about what the cause of this disease is, but nothing definitive has been linked to why a person may get this. There is a hereditary factor.

There is currently no cure for this disease. There have been many advances in treatments recently.

The medical community says that we can exercise our brains the same way we exercise our muscles. They suggest that we engage our brains. We can do this by doing crossword puzzles, Sudoku puzzles, and keeping active and social for example.

For more information on helping a loved one with this disease, or finding help in caring for a loved one with this disease you can contact the Trident Area Agency on Aging or the Ark.

Let’s not make patients with this “A” outcasts in our society.




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