



CAPE COD HEALTHCARE

Dementia and Alzheimer's Caregiver Support

Alzheimer's Disease Begins



Early Stage

average length 2-5 years

- Short term memory loss/repetition
- Changes in mood
- Changes in personality
- Loss of initiative
- Depression / Apathy
- Isolation
- Inability to learn new things
- Disorientation
- Difficulty with word finding
- Confusion
- Problem with abstract thinking
- Confabulation
- Difficulty performing tasks
- Difficulty following instructions
- Visual spatial disturbances start
- Poor judgment
- Diminished sense of smell
- Altered sense of time

Intervention

- Identify sources of support (spouse, family, and neighbors)
- Refer family for legal assistance (health care proxy, durable power of attorney)
- Teach importance of financial planning; Medicaid Estate Plan
- Examine current insurance policies/develop care budget
- Refer to medical community (proper diagnosis, assessments, and treatment) if not completed.
- Identify community resources (Elder Services, respite, adult day health, and meals on wheels, church support)
- Refer to CCHC Dementia & Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Program
- (current disease information, support groups for caregivers and early stage, helpline, "Safe Return" registration, respite funds)
- Organize emergency home plan
- Home safety; fall alert device.

AD progress into frontal & temporal lobes



Middle Stage

average 2-5 years

- Difference between early & middle stage is the beginning of functional losses, both fine motor & gross motor skills. Seen as (problems initiating ADLs, loss of fine motor skills, loss of gross motor skills)
- Loss of long term memory now noticeable
- Loss of ability to use language
- Visual/spatial disturbances more profound
- Increase or decrease of appetite
- Increased isolation
- Incontinence usually starts in this stage
- Wandering
- Psychiatric disturbances/behavioral issues (paranoia, delusions, hallucinations, anxiety, aggression)

Intervention

- Address all early stage interventions
- Address caregiver availability
- Address level of caregiver stress
- Adapt home for increased safety needs
- Notify local police/Silver Alert Registration (photo to local station, notify police of current address)
- Instruct family to call 911 (for aggressive outbursts, episodes of wandering, falls)
- Refer to Elders at Risk if no significant other for guardianship
- Refer to elder law attorney for long Term Medicaid planning if not already completed.
- Teach need for potential long term care placement (provide lists of facilities with Alzheimer's units, refer to CCHC Dementia & Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Program for assistance)

Complete Brain Involvement



Late Stage

average 2-5 years

- Dependent in all ADLs
- Non-ambulatory
- Little, if any, verbalization
- Inability to chew or swallow
- Incontinence
- Totally withdrawn
- Potential exists for seizures
- Death (most often due to aspiration pneumonia, septicemia, lack of adequate nutrition/hydration)

Intervention

- Address all early and middle stage interventions
- Make referral to Hospice
- Provide emotional support to families (refer to caregiver support group, refer to CCHC Dementia & Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Program)
- Address grief/loss issues with family