

Dementia vs. Alzheimer's Disease: What's the Difference - It's easy to get confused about the difference between dementia and Alzheimer's disease, since they're often talked about together. This quick breakdown helps explain what each one is, how they're connected, and what sets them apart.

Dementia:

- A general term that describes a group of symptoms that affect cognitive function, such as memory loss, confusion, difficulty with language, and problems with decision-making.
- Caused by various underlying conditions, including Alzheimer's disease.
- Not a specific disease itself.

Alzheimer's Disease:

- A specific type of dementia that is caused by the buildup of abnormal proteins in the brain called amyloid plaques and tau tangles.
- Accounts for about 60-80% of dementia cases.
- Characterized by progressive cognitive decline, memory loss, and changes in behavior and personality.

Key Differences:

- Cause: Dementia is a general term for a group of symptoms, while Alzheimer's disease is a specific disease that causes dementia.
- Prevalence: Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia.
- Symptoms: Both dementia and Alzheimer's disease can cause memory loss, confusion, and other cognitive problems, but the specific symptoms and progression may vary depending on the underlying condition.
- Diagnosis: Diagnosing dementia involves ruling out other possible causes, while diagnosing Alzheimer's disease typically requires brain imaging and cognitive testing.

Alzheimer's and Dementia 24/7 Helpline:

The Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline (800.272.3900) is a free service offering support for people living with dementia, caregivers, families and the public. Connect with a live person who can provide information, local resources, crisis assistance and emotional support. Dial 711 to connect with a telecommunications relay service (TRS) for people who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired.

Submitted by the St. Mark UMC Health and Welfare Ministry