



PFCD
ALZHEIMER'S

Understanding Alzheimer's Disease

Top 10 Common Misconceptions About a Top 10 Killer



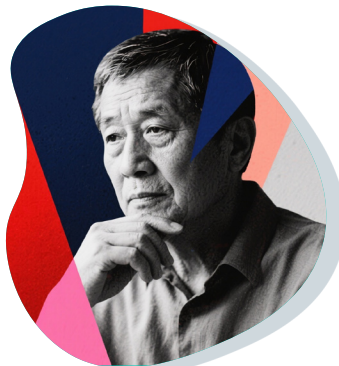
1 **Myth:** Alzheimer's disease is a normal part of aging.

Fact: While memory loss can be a normal part of aging, the cognitive decline and other symptoms associated with Alzheimer's arise from physical changes in the brain, **specifically damage to neurons** from amyloid plaque and tau tangles building up. Alzheimer's is a progressive, fatal neurological disease and understanding the difference between normal aging and Alzheimer's is crucial for early detection, intervention, and care.



2 **Myth:** Alzheimer's only affects the elderly.

Fact: Although age is a risk factor, the damage from Alzheimer's can start much earlier. Research is underway to detect and diagnose in earlier stages of this disease.



4 **Myth:** Only a small portion of the population is affected by Alzheimer's.

Fact: More than **7 million Americans** are living with this disease today and that number is expected to nearly double to over 13 million by 2050, which means millions more families, caregivers, and communities will feel the strain of this disease. Without action, the U.S. will spend **\$1 trillion** on treatments alone by 2050.

3 **Myth:** Alzheimer's only impacts memory.

Fact: Alzheimer's affects much more than memory, including personality changes, loss of language function, and difficulty with basic tasks. It is ultimately fatal.

5 **Myth:** We don't know what causes Alzheimer's.

Fact: Decades of peer-reviewed research identified the accumulation of beta-amyloid plaques in the brain as an early event in the development of Alzheimer's. Amyloid plaques can begin to accumulate in the brain as many as **20 years** before symptoms appear. Although people in these "preclinical" stages do not yet show cognitive symptoms, the hallmarks of Alzheimer's disease are detectable, which is similar to the lack of clinical symptoms in the early stages of cancer, coronary artery disease, HIV, and other diseases.

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6 Myth: Alzheimer's can only be detected in later stages, well after symptoms show.

Fact: In May 2025, the FDA cleared the first blood test to help detect Alzheimer's in adults 50 and who are already exhibiting signs and symptoms of the disease. The following October, the FDA cleared another blood test to aid in the initial assessment of Alzheimer's and other causes of cognitive decline in the primary-care setting. These tests are simpler and more affordable than traditional imaging options, making earlier detection and interventions – and thus better outcomes – possible.

7 Myth: Alzheimer's is genetic and there's nothing one can do to reduce their risk.

Fact: While researchers have found a **genetic component** to Alzheimer's, new **data** shows that lifestyle choices (e.g., regular exercise, a balanced diet, quality sleep, and social engagement) can support brain health and reduce one's risk of developing the disease.



9 Myth: Targeting amyloid plaque in the brain is not the right way to address Alzheimer's.

Fact: Extensive **research** shows a strong link between the presence of beta-amyloid plaques in the brain and Alzheimer's. Recently approved anti-amyloid therapies significantly reduce these plaques to help slow both cognitive decline and disease progression in early stages. Some criticism about targeting amyloid stems from a 2006 **paper** that has since been retracted due to research misconduct. **Experts stress** that the overall body of rigorous gold-standard science supports the amyloid approach.



8 Myth: There's no treatment for Alzheimer's.

Fact: After decades of research, there are now two **FDA-approved** therapies that can be used in early stages to alter the underlying biology of Alzheimer's and slow disease progression. Ongoing research continues to advance our understanding and ability to fight the disease.

10 Myth: Fighting Alzheimer's isn't a top priority for most Americans.

Fact: Recent polling shows **92% of voters** overwhelmingly support efforts to address Alzheimer's, including policies to ensure coverage of FDA-cleared blood tests and access to FDA-approved treatments. Earlier detection and prevention efforts could save the U.S. billions of dollars. Combating Alzheimer's transcends partisan politics – it is a critical healthcare priority for Americans across the political spectrum.