



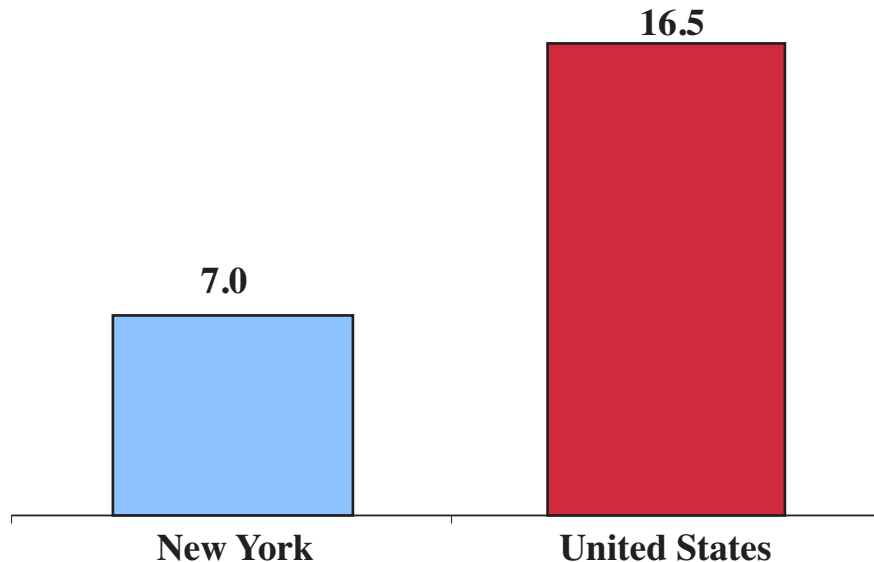
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## The Facts About...

# Alzheimer's Disease

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### Age-Adjusted Death Rate by Alzheimer's Disease, 1999 Per 100,000 Population



*Source: Morgan Quitno Press citing U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics "National Vital Statistics Reports, 2001."*

In 1999, 1,357 people died in New York due to Alzheimer's disease, and about 44,536 deaths occurred in the United States. It is estimated that nearly 4 million Americans suffer from Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia among older people. It involves the parts of the brain that control thought, memory and language. According to the Alzheimer's Disease Education & Referral Center ([www.alzheimers.org](http://www.alzheimers.org)), the disease usually starts occurring after age 60, with risk increasing with age. About 3 percent of men and women ages 65 to 74 have the disease, and nearly half of those age 65 and older may have the disease. An important note is that Alzheimer's disease is not a normal part of aging.

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**The Empire State Association of Adult Homes  
and Assisted Living Facilities**

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### What Causes Alzheimer's Disease?

Scientists do not yet fully understand what causes Alzheimer's disease, however there are several risk factors for the disease. Age is the most important known risk factor for Alzheimer's disease. Another risk factor is family history. A rare form of the disease, called familial AD, usually occurs between the ages of 30 and 60, and can be inherited. However, in the more common form of the disease, which occurs later in life, no family or genetic pattern is seen.

*Source: Alzheimer's Disease Education & Referral Center*



### What Are Some Symptoms of Alzheimer's Disease?

In the early stages, the symptoms may be very subtle. Symptoms may often include:

- repeating statements frequently
- frequently misplaced items
- getting lost on familiar routes
- personality changes
- becoming passive and losing interest in things previously enjoyed
- trouble remembering recent events and activities
- trouble remembering names of familiar people or things
- simple math problems may be difficult to solve

In a more advanced stage, the deficits are more obvious. Some of the symptoms are:

- a decrease in knowledge of recent events
- forgetting events in their life history, essentially losing awareness of who they are
- problems choosing proper clothing
- hallucinations, arguments, striking out and violent behavior
- delusions, depression, agitation

In severe Alzheimer's disease, a person can no longer survive without assistance. Most people in this stage no longer understand language, they no longer recognize family members, and they can no longer perform basic activities of daily living such as eating, dressing, and bathing.

*Source: Yahoo! Health citing A.D.A.M.*

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### How is Alzheimer's Disease Diagnosed and Tested?

The first step in diagnosing Alzheimer's disease is to establish that dementia is present. Second, the type of dementia should be clarified. A healthcare provider will take a history, do a physical and neurological exam and do a mental status examination. Other tests may be ordered to help determine if there is a treatable condition that could cause dementia or contribute to the worsening of Alzheimer's disease. These conditions include thyroid disease, vitamin deficiency, brain tumor, drug and medication intoxication, chronic infection and severe depression. Alzheimer's disease usually has a characteristic pattern of symptoms and can be diagnosed by history and physical exam by an experienced clinician. Tests that are often done to evaluate or exclude other causes of dementia include Computed Tomography (CT), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and blood tests.

*Source: Yahoo! Health citing A.D.A.M.*



### Additional Information on Alzheimer's Disease

- [Alzheimers Association \(www.alz.org\)](http://www.alz.org)
- [Eldercare Locator](#)
- [MEDLINE plus - health information: Alzheimer's Disease](#)
- [www.alzheimersdisease.com](http://www.alzheimersdisease.com)

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