

The Dining Experience: Mealtime Challenges

HCANJ Annual Symposium
October 26, 2010



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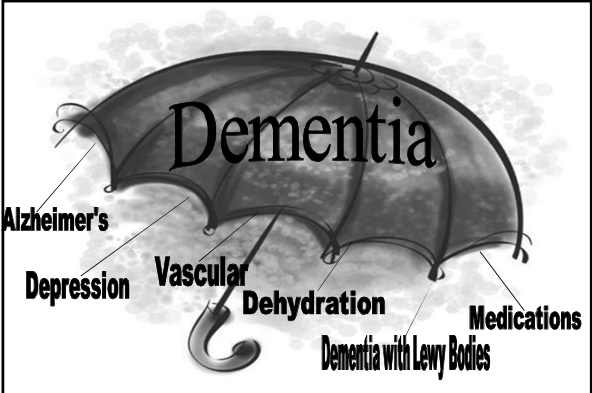
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Objectives

- “ Understand the affect of Alzheimer’s disease on the individuals ability to communicate needs and perceive the environment
- “ Discuss challenges and consequences with eating and drinking for residents with dementia
- “ Understand causes and approach for challenging mealtime situations and important features of the dining environment
- “ Learn ways to make the mealtime a pleasant experience and meaningful interaction for the person with dementia.

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Symptoms of Dementia

- " Memory loss
- " Disorientation
- " Problems doing complicated tasks
- " Language problems
- " Lack of concentration
- " Loss of visual spatial skills
- " Difficult with old skills
- " Personality changes

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Other Causes of Dementia Symptoms:

- " Medications (side effects/interactions)
- " Vitamin deficiency (Niacin, Thiamine & B-12)
- " Certain tumors or infections of the brain
- " Blood clots pressing on the brain
- " Metabolic imbalances, including thyroid, kidney, or liver disorders
- " Malnutrition and dehydration

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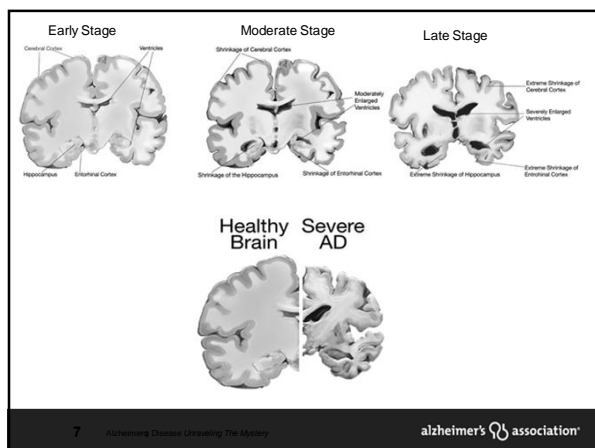
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Alzheimer's Disease

- " The most common cause of dementia
- " A degenerative neurological disorder that begins gradually and progresses at a variable rate.
- " Results in impaired memory, thinking and behavior
- " Amyloid plaques and neurofibrillary tangles
- " Two types: young onset and late onset

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Types of Communication

“ **Verbal:** the use of meaningful words, nonsense or made up words, singing, sounds and shouts

“ **Non-Verbal:** the use of body language; non-verbal communication is done with:

Eyes	- Body posture
Touch	- Position
Facial expressions	- Tone of voice
Gestures/hand movements	

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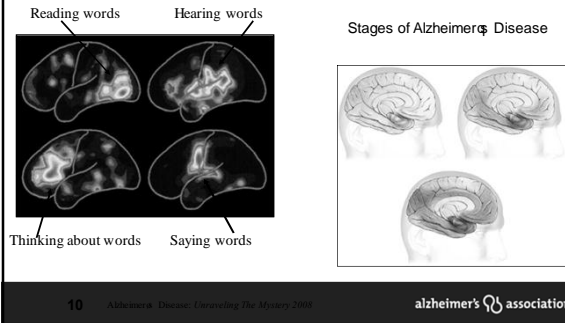
The Human Brain

“ **The hippocampus:** important for learning and short-term memory. Thought to be the site where short-term memory is converted to long-term memory for storage in other parts of the brain

The diagram shows a sagittal view of the human brain with labels for the Cerebral Cortex, Hippocampus, Amygdala, Hypothalamus, Pituitary Gland, and Brain Stem.

9 Alzheimer's Disease: Unraveling The Mystery, 2004 alzheimer's association

How Alzheimer's Disease Affects Communication



What Not To Do

- ❑ Don't argue
- ❑ Don't try to use logic
- ❑ Don't order the person around
- ❑ Don't tell the person what he/she can't do
- ❑ Don't raise your voice
- ❑ Don't talk down to the person
- ❑ Don't ask questions that require the person to remember facts
- ❑ Don't talk about the person as though he/she is not there

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Tips for Better Communication

- ~ Be calm and supportive
- ~ Focus on feelings not facts
- ~ Pay attention to tone of voice
- ~ Speak slowly and clearly
- ~ Use short, simple and familiar words
- ~ Ask one question at a time
- ~ Allow time for response
- ~ Avoid use of pronouns, negative statements and quizzing
- ~ Try touch or gestures
- ~ Do not talk about the person as if he/she were not there
- ~ Have patience, flexibility and understanding

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Consequences of Not Eating Enough

- " Weight Loss
- " Agitation
- " Weakness
- " Skin breakdown
- " Less immunity
- " Infections
- " Problems healing wounds
- " Pressure sores
- " Dehydration
- " Malnutrition
- " Fatigue
- " Confusion

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Risk of Dehydration

- " Feel less thirst
- " Become dehydrated quicker
- " Kidneys don't work as well
- " More swallowing difficulty
- " Greater use of laxatives
- " Dependence



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Resident's Mealtime History

- " Culture/background?
- " Eat alone or in a group setting?
- " Time of day for meals?
- " Big or small portions?
- " The cook?
- " Breakfast or coffee-only in morning?



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What To Look For: Functional Ability

- . Food/fluid intake
- . Food to mouth
- . Utensil/glassware use
- . Food spills
- . Motor skills
- . Balance/Posture
- . Coordination/Strength
- . Swallowing/Chewing



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What To Look For: Physical

- " Weight loss or gain
- " Change in skin color
- " Breathing problems
- " Pain
- " Tremors



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What To Look For: Social/Emotional/Behavioral

- " Contentment
- " Worries and concerns
- " Willingness to eat
- " Ability to get along with tablemates
- " Need for privacy
- " Agitation . verbal and physical
- " Other dementia-related behavior



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Enhancing Mealtimes: Practice



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Campaign for Quality Residential Care

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The Ideal Mealtime Environment

- " Few distractions
- " Few interruptions
- " Good lighting
- " Small dining rooms with few items on the tables
- " Soft music or no music, depending on residents' preferences
- " Visual cues used such as contrast between plate, food and place setting
- " Guests seated



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Approaches for Independence

- " Assess abilities
- " Verbal reminders
- " Hand over or under hand assistance
- " One part of the meal at a time
- " Simplifying meal
- " Mirroring
- " Finger foods



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Greater New Jersey Chapter Services

- ~ Helpline (800) 883-1180 available 24/7
- ~ Caregivers Respite Care Assistance Program
- ~ MedicAlert® + Alzheimer's Association Safe Return®
- ~ Resource Library
- ~ Newsletter
- ~ The Learning Institute:
 - Professional training
 - Community education
 - Family caregiver education
 - Early stage workshops
- ~ Support Groups
- ~ Public Policy/Advocacy
- ~ www.alznj.org