

## Coping with Alzheimer's

It's uncertain what causes Alzheimer's disease (AD) and there currently is no cure. In fact, the only definite way to diagnose AD is after the person has died and there has been an autopsy.

AD is a slow disease, starting with mild memory problems and ending with severe brain damage. The course the disease takes and how fast changes occur vary from person to person, but patients will eventually need total care.

### Dealing with the Diagnosis

Finding out that a loved one has AD can be stressful, frightening and overwhelming. As you begin to take stock of the situation, here are some tips that may help:

- › Communicate with the doctor.
- › Learn about best treatments to alleviate symptoms or address behavior problems.
- › Contact Alzheimer's organizations for resources.
- › Adapt routines to maximize the moments when the person with AD is less confused or more cooperative.
- › Organize financial and legal documents, investigate long-term care options and determine what services are covered by health insurance and Medicare.

### Caregiver challenges

Caregivers can be at an increased risk for depression and illness, especially if they do not receive adequate support from family, friends and the community. Self-care is also essential to caregivers' well-being:

- › Eat healthy, exercise regularly, get plenty of rest and find time to socialize.
- › Consider using adult day care or in-home companion services.
- › Learn stress-management exercises, such as yoga or tai-chi.
- › Take a break.
- › Get outside at least once every day.
- › Take classes on caregiving, problem-solving and management skills.
- › Find a support group where you can share your feelings.

### Resources

Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral (ADEAR) Center:  
[www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers](http://www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers)

Alzheimer's Association: [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)

Family Caregiver Alliance: [www.caregiver.org](http://www.caregiver.org)

### Additional Information

This information is brought to you by ComPsych® GuidanceResources®. This company-sponsored benefit offers confidential help and support 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, at no cost to you or your immediate family. Our GuidanceConsultants<sup>SM</sup> can assist you with your concerns at: **877-627-4239**

Online: [www.guidanceresources.com](http://www.guidanceresources.com)

Enter your company ID: **MAP\_4\_IBEW**

**4th District**  
**IBEW**  
**Health Fund**

