



AFTER A DIAGNOSIS

Once you receive a diagnosis of dementia or Alzheimer's disease, it's important to consider what to do next. Start by talking with your physician.



Your Physician Visit

When diagnosed with Alzheimer's or a related dementia, you should expect specific, helpful information from your physician. He or she will:

- Explain the diagnosis and disease process.
ASK: What can I expect in the near future and over time?
- Tell you about possible treatments, so together, you can select what is best for you.
ASK: What are the available treatments that do not involve medications?
- Directly discuss medication options for memory loss, behavior changes, or both.
ASK: What are the risks and benefits? What are the side effects?

- Explain ways to maintain your lifestyle and stay engaged and active.
ASK: What can I do to maintain my health and wellness?
ASK: What activities should I consider?
- Tell you where to get more information about the disease and services in your community.
ASK: Where can I turn locally to learn more about the disease and find services available to me?
- Schedule your next visit and let you know how often he/she wants to see you.
ASK: What can my care partner learn that will be helpful to both of us?



What Should You Know and Do?

ACT on Alzheimer's offers these action steps and tips to consider soon after diagnosis. Share this information with those in your life who will be alongside you on this journey. Take advantage of the support and resources available so you can live life to the fullest.

After Your Diagnosis

After receiving your diagnosis, start thinking about next steps.

- Learn all you can about the disease and what to expect now and into your future.

Contact the Alzheimer's Association at 800-272-3900 or visit www.alz.org/mnnd

- Learn what steps to take to maintain your health and wellness. Two practical resources to check out are:

Living Well Workbook
www.actonalz.org/pdf/Living-Well.pdf

Taking Action Workbook
www.actonalz.org/pdf/Taking-Action.pdf

- Consider joining a support group with others who are living with the disease.

Call the Alzheimer's Association at 800-272-3900 or visit www.alz.org/mnnd for support groups in your community

- Learn how you can continue to live safely in your home.

Visit the Safety Center at www.alz.org/safety

- Learn about safe driving tips.

Visit the Dementia and Driving Resource Center at www.alz.org/driving

- Decide who you want to be part of your support team (see page 3).

ACT on Alzheimer's is a statewide, volunteer-driven collaboration dedicated to creating supportive communities for individuals and families touched by Alzheimer's disease and dementia. Passionate and committed partners, supporters, action communities, and Minnesotans are taking part and making a difference.



What Should Those Who Care About You Do?

Care Partner

A care partner (or caregiver) can be a spouse, friend, partner, adult child, neighbor, faith group member, or anyone who helps care for another person. As a care partner:

Learn all you can.

- Learn about the disease and how it may affect and change your life as well as the life of the person you are helping.
- Learn tips for communicating patiently and supportively with the person who has memory loss.

Take care of you.

- Schedule regular medical check-ups.
- Share the diagnosis with others so they understand the new role you're taking on and can provide support.



Share this information with your care partner

Plan ahead.

- Make legal, financial, and other life plans with the person you're caring for as long as they are able.

Ask for help.

- Let family and friends know what they can do to help you.

Find and use local resources.

- Consider respite care, caregiver education and training programs, and caregiver coaching services. Contact the Alzheimer's Association Minnesota-North Dakota, 800-272-3900, or the Senior LinkAge Line®, 800-333-2433.

Family Members

When someone is diagnosed with Alzheimer's or dementia, it affects everyone in the family. As a family member:

Learn all you can.

- Learn about the disease and educate others in your family.

Find and use community resources.

- Take advantage of community resources such as family support groups and education programs.



Share this information with your family

Organize a family meeting.

- Talk about the diagnosis and next steps.

Plan ahead.

- Talk with your family member about his or her financial and legal plans and health care wishes. Two resources are:

Honoring Choices
www.honoringchoices.org

Minnesota Healthcare Directive
www.mnaging.net/Advisor/HealthCareDirective.aspx

Care Coordinator

A care coordinator* may be available to you in your clinic or medical facility. A care coordinator will:

- Help you and your family understand your disease, treatment, and what to expect in the future.
- Coordinate a comprehensive assessment of your current condition, explain the results to you, and develop the right care plan with you and your care partner.
- Help you with medications, recommend ways to maximize your activities, and review home safety – now and in the future.
- Connect you and your care partner with community services and resources.
- Check in with you and your care partner to stay on top of new issues that come up.
- Be your first contact with the clinic or other medical facility handling your care.

**Speak to your physician to learn if you have access to a care coordinator or similar professional at your clinic or medical facility. If one is not available, care consultation services may be available in your community. Contact the Senior LinkAge Line® at 800-333-2433 or Alzheimer's Association Minnesota-North Dakota at 800-272-3900.*

Community Supports

To stay as healthy and independent as possible, it's important to know about and to use local services and resources. Link to an expert by calling Senior LinkAge Line® One Stop Shop for Minnesota Seniors at 800-333-2433 or visit www.MinnesotaHelp.info® to locate and arrange for support such as indoor and outdoor chore services, home-delivered meals, transportation, and assistance with paying for prescription drugs.

As your journey with dementia or Alzheimer's continues, keep taking steps to make sure your needs and preferences are met and that you and those who care about you get the best support possible...now and into the future.

