

June is Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month

May 31, 2022

The number of older adults with Alzheimer's Disease is expected to triple over the next 40 years, according to the **CDC**. Alzheimer's and related dementias cause memory decline and loss of independence and have wide-ranging impacts not only on those with the disease, their families and caregivers, but also on communities and health-care systems.

What are Alzheimer's disease and dementia?

- Dementia is a general term for conditions that cause loss of memory severe enough that they may impact a person's ability to carry out daily activities. There are many kinds of dementia, but Alzheimer's is the most common type.
- Alzheimer's Disease is a type of dementia that causes problems with memory, thinking, language, and behavior. It may begin with mild memory loss, and symptoms can slowly worsen over time.

Who's at risk?

A major risk factor for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias is age; however, race and ethnicity can be risk factors for the diseases as well. Among people ages 65 and older, the largest percentage of those with the diseases were African Americans (14 percent), followed by Hispanics (12 percent), and non-Hispanic whites (10 percent). Hispanic and African American populations are expected to have the greatest increase in Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

By 2060, the number of Hispanics will be seven times larger than what it is now, and the number of African Americans will be four times larger. The increases are a result of fewer people dying from other chronic diseases and surviving into older adulthood when the risk for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias increases.

There are several things that can be done to help persons with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, their caregivers, and persons at risk for dementia.

Caregivers can:

- Encourage those with symptoms to speak with their healthcare provider.
- Plan for the financial and health-related impacts that caregivers often experience over the course of the person's dementia.