

Alzheimers Disease and Disorientation

Disorientation, for example, not knowing who or where you are or what day month it is, is a very common symptom of Alzheimer's disease. It is also thought of as one of the defining early symptoms as it is very closely connected with a person's memory or ability to remember. Insignificant things disappear first, and usually so gradually that it's not noted by family or friends for weeks or even months.

One example of this disorientation is that an Alzheimer's sufferer may become puzzled and unsure of where they are even though they may be in familiar surroundings. They may also forget names or birthdays. Initially an Alzheimer's sufferer might forget facts that are least thought of, such as the current year or someone's year of birth. Gradually the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease will become more pronounced. They may then begin to forget the correct month or season. Eventually, they will be unsure of the days of the week or their own name. Finally, their memory loss will become so acute that they remain in a constant state of confusion or disorientation.

Getting lost outside the home usually becomes a problem towards the latter stages of the illness. It is common to hear stories of people travelling to a home they lived in as many as 30 years prior. This results when dysfunction in the short term memory causes those memories to be replaced by long term memories. The Alzheimer's patient can no longer make the distinction that they moved from that house in the distant past.

Additionally, the latter stages of Alzheimer's disease can pose additional problems for people speaking a second language. Because their short term memory is affected, people who suffer from Alzheimer's often lose the ability to speak or understand their adopted language. This can, of course, further communication problems with others around them. Eventually, as they lose even their ability to read, write, and converse, the Alzheimer's sufferer retreats into his or her own isolated world.