

## **How much do you know about Alzheimer's disease?**

### **True or false:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Alzheimer's disease is a normal part of aging.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Alzheimer's disease was first diagnosed in 1980
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The only way to confirm a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease is through an autopsy.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The most common form of dementia is Alzheimer's disease.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Medicare or private health insurance pays for most long-term care for individuals with Alzheimer's disease.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Alzheimer's disease is fatal.

### **Fill in the blanks:**

7. There are approximately \_\_\_\_\_ West Virginians over the age of 65 who have Alzheimer's disease, and \_\_\_\_\_ million nationally.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ % of people 85 and older have Alzheimer's disease.
9. The hidden victim of Alzheimer's disease is \_\_\_\_\_.
10. The average lifetime cost per patient is \$\_\_\_\_\_.

## How much do you know about Alzheimer's disease?

True or false:

**1. Alzheimer's disease is a normal part of aging. False**

If there is memory loss and confusion to the point that it affects normal daily living, there is a reason for it. It is not a normal part of aging. The symptoms may not be Alzheimer's disease; there are many conditions that can cause similar symptoms, but it is something that should be checked out.

**2. Alzheimer's disease was first diagnosed in 1980. False**

It was actually first diagnosed in 1906 by Dr. Alois Alzheimer. His work was focused on a relatively young female patient (in her early fifties), and it was many years before researchers connected his work with what they were seeing in their older patients. Much of the current research on Alzheimer's disease did not begin until the late 1970's and early 80's.

**3. The only way to confirm a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease is through an autopsy. True**

There is no single, simple test for Alzheimer's disease. If doctors run a series of tests and compare the results of the combined tests, they can be 85-90% sure it's Alzheimer's disease. However, the only way to confirm the diagnosis is through a brain autopsy. There is now an Alzheimer's disease registry in West Virginia, and doctors are encouraged to register their patients diagnosed with probable Alzheimer's disease.

**4. The most common form of dementia is Alzheimer's disease. True**

Dementia is an umbrella term that describes a set of symptoms – memory loss, confusion, behavior changes, personality changes. Many conditions can cause dementia. The most common form of dementia is Alzheimer's disease. Dementia is the generic term; Alzheimer's is one type of dementia.

**5. Medicare or private health insurance pays for most long-term care for individuals with Alzheimer's disease. False**

Medicare pays for long term care only when you have an acute care need in addition to having Alzheimer's. Private health insurance also does not cover the type of long-term care needed by most individuals with Alzheimer's, unless you have a long-term care insurance policy.

6. **Alzheimer's disease is fatal. True**

If Alzheimer's disease runs its course, if nothing else intervenes and causes that person's death (heart attack, stroke, pneumonia – which may be a side effect of Alzheimer's, because the immune system also breaks down), then, as brain cells die, functions and body systems continue to shut down. Eventually, the body quits because of the destruction of brain cells.

**Fill in the blanks:**

7. **There are approximately \_\_\_\_\_ West Virginians over the age of 65 who have Alzheimer's disease, and \_\_\_\_\_ million nationally.**

**44,000. 5,400,000.** How many of you were born between the years 1946 and 1964? You're the baby boomers, 77,000,000 strong. As baby boomers continue to age, the number of people with Alzheimer's disease will increase dramatically, seriously overburdening a health care system that's already under a lot of strain. We need research dollars **now** to find a treatment, cure, or way to prevent Alzheimer's before the baby boomers reluctantly reach old age. The federal government recently (in 2012) added \$50,000,000 to the National Institute on Aging's Alzheimer's research and has asked for additional funding in the 2013 budget.

8. **\_\_\_\_\_ % of people 85 and older have Alzheimer's disease.**

**Almost 50%.** And the fastest growing segment of the American population is people over the age of 85. We're living longer, not necessarily healthier.

9. **The hidden victim of Alzheimer's disease is \_\_\_\_\_.**

**The caregiver (family).** Many caregivers, because of stress and physical and emotional exhaustion, become physically sicker than their loved ones with Alzheimer's. Some even die long before the family member for whom they are caring.

10. **The average lifetime cost per patient is \$\_\_\_\_\_.**

**Close to \$200,000.** And rising. Couple that with the fact that Medicare and private health insurance don't cover most of the long term care costs, and you can see why this is such a burden for families.