

1985. It is the only ADRC in Missouri and one of the leading centers in the world.

The Knight ADRC strives to maintain a diverse and inclusive research population. If only one group of people are studied, such as Caucasians, the information may only apply to that group. Understanding why African Americans are at greater risk for AD requires studying African Americans.

The Center benefits greatly from the expertise of its African American Advisory Board (AAAB), comprised of leaders in the St. Louis community. The AAAB guides the research team on strategies to encourage active, long-term participation of African Americans in memory and aging studies. Volunteers from a variety of backgrounds play an important role in helping to find truly effective therapies for everyone with AD.

Currently more than 800 volunteers participate in studies at the Center. Some volunteers have AD, and others are healthy older adults. Volunteers are assessed every year on their memory and thinking abilities, and participate in other studies, such as brain scans. There is no cost to participate in any procedure or study, and participants can agree or decline to participate at any time.

For most people, the brain can retain the majority of its memory power for a lifetime. Alzheimer's, however, remains a real threat. If you would like more information about volunteering to join our studies, please call (314) 286-2683.

10 WARNING SIGNS OF AD:

1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life
2. Challenges in planning or solving problems
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work or at leisure
4. Confusion with time or place
5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships
6. New problems with words in speaking or writing
7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps
8. Decreased or poor judgment
9. Withdrawal from work or social activities
10. Changes in mood and personality

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Alzheimer Disease and African Americans



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MEMORY LOSS IS NOT A PART OF NORMAL AGING...

Abnormal memory loss can be related to a variety of brain diseases. The most common cause of memory loss in older adulthood is Alzheimer disease (AD), the sixth leading cause of death in the United States.

Many older adults complain of memory lapses, such as temporarily misplacing eyeglasses, but continue to live independently without needing help from others. This is normal aging and not AD. In contrast, a person with AD has consistent short-term memory loss, such as repeating questions and thinking problems that interfere with carrying out usual activities, such as shopping, cooking, or driving.



AD is marked by gradual but certain worsening of memory and thinking.

Symptoms may include:

- Poor decision-making in activities such as household finances and driving
- Language difficulties, such as inability to come up with names or words
- Emotional distress, including irritability, anxiety, or depression

AFRICAN AMERICANS AND RISK

Alzheimer and related diseases are a major public health problem. About 11% of Caucasians age 70 and older have AD. For reasons yet unclear, it appears to affect 21% of African Americans of the same age. Possible factors for this double risk may relate to high blood pressure and diabetes, which are more common in older African Americans than older Caucasians, and may increase the risk of AD.



WHAT IS GOOD FOR THE HEART IS GOOD FOR THE BRAIN

Conditions such as high blood pressure or activities such as smoking may reduce heart health and increase the risk for AD. Steps to improve heart health and possibly decrease AD risk include:

- Reducing high cholesterol through medication and diet
- Managing diabetes with diet, medication, and regular doctor visits
- Monitoring your blood pressure and taking medicines as prescribed
- Getting regular exercise, such as walking, gardening, or dancing
- Eating a healthy diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and lean protein such as fish
- Giving up smoking

And, exercise your brain!

- Challenge yourself with new activities such as riddles or puzzles
- Learn something new or begin a hobby
- Engage in social activities with friends, family, your faith community, or other special interest groups
- Stay well rested. Going to bed and rising at the same times each day helps your brain's internal clock establish a healthy pattern

WHAT IF I AM CONCERNED ABOUT MYSELF OR A LOVED ONE?

Like other diseases, early detection of AD can lead to faster support and treatment to address symptoms. It is important to see a doctor soon when any symptoms appear. Many people begin with a



visit to their primary care physician, who may suggest a visit to a specialist, such as a neurologist, geriatrician, or neuropsychologist. These specialists are expertly

trained to treat older adults or changes in brain health.

THE SEARCH TO PREVENT ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE IS HAPPENING HERE IN ST. LOUIS

The National Institutes of Health established the Knight Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC) in St. Louis at Washington University in