



Health Hints



Ask The Expert About Alzheimer's Disease

(NAPSA)—Did you know that about one in five Americans between the ages of 75 and 84, and almost half of those 85 years and older suffer from Alzheimer's disease?¹

Alzheimer's disease is a progressive, neurodegenerative disease that occurs over a period of years, eventually leading to severe impairment of a person's mental capacity and the inability to carry out even simple daily functions. Research shows that nearly half of Alzheimer's patients are first diagnosed in the moderate or severe stages.²

Caring for a person with Alzheimer's disease takes considerable time and energy. Nearly one-fourth of caregivers report providing more than 40 hours of care per week.³ As Alzheimer's patients lose the ability to perform activities of daily living such as dressing or bathing, and experience behavioral disturbances such as agitation and aggression, they lose autonomy and need increased care and support.

Needless to say, having a loved one affected by Alzheimer's disease can be overwhelming. Dr. Beth Safirstein, Assistant Vice President of Business Development at the Baumel-Eisner Neuromedical Institute in South Florida and an expert on Alzheimer's disease, answers some commonly asked questions:

Q: My grandmother was just diagnosed with moderate Alzheimer's disease. Is it too



Alzheimer's disease expert, Dr. Beth Safirstein, addresses commonly asked questions about the disease.

late for treatment?

A: Almost everyone with Alzheimer's progresses through three stages of the disease (mild, moderate, and then severe). It is important to start treatment upon diagnosis regardless of the stage to ensure that patients maintain their mental capacity, independence and ability to perform basic activities for as long as possible.

Q: My father is taking a medication for Alzheimer's disease. Is there anything else we can do?

A: Depending on the medication he's taking, another type of medication called Namenda® can be added in the moderate to severe stages. Namenda works differently from other treatments such as Aricept®, Exelon® and Razadyne™ which are approved only for the mild to moderate

stages, so it can be used alone or in combination with these medications for moderate-stage patients. Additionally, non-medication options like art therapy or adult day care can also benefit patients and provide relief to caregivers.

Q: Will medication help return my mother's memory or her ability to perform basic self-care activities?

A: Unfortunately, there is no cure for Alzheimer's, but medication can slow the progression of symptoms. Maintaining a patient's ability to dress unassisted, recognize a grandchild or hold a conversation with a loved one can mean all the difference in the world. Additionally, research has shown that compared to placebo, Namenda, taken along with another approved Alzheimer's medication, can help patients with daily functioning, such as grooming, the ability to watch TV and the ability to find belongings.⁴

Namenda is indicated for moderate to severe Alzheimer's disease and is available by prescription in the U.S. Ask your physician or healthcare provider about Namenda or visit www.Namenda.com.

Namenda is contraindicated in patients with known hypersensitivity to memantine HCl or to any excipients used in the formulation. The most common adverse events reported with Namenda vs placebo (≥5% and greater than placebo) were dizziness, confusion, headache, and constipation. In patients with severe renal impairment, the dosage should be reduced.



1) American Health Assistance Foundation. Available at: www.ahaf.org/alzdis/about/adrisk.htm

2) Market Measures Interactive, "The Treatment of Alzheimer's Disease Study X, May 2004"

3) Alzheimer's Association and National Alliance for Caregiving. *Families Care: Alzheimer's Caregiving in the United States 2004*. Available at <http://alz.org/Resources/FactSheets/Caregiverreport.pdf>

4) Tariot PN, Farlow MR, Grossberg GT, Graham SM, McDonald S, Gergel I, for the Memantine Study Group. Memantine treatment in patients with moderate to severe Alzheimer disease already receiving donepezil: a randomized controlled trial. *JAMA*. 2004;291:317-324.