

## Chapter 18 Lesson 3: Health Through the Life Cycle

### Introduction:

In this lesson, you learned about many of the physical and mental changes that adults go through from the age of 40 on up. You also learned about some of the health concerns that affect many older adults. One problem that affects many older adults is minor memory lapses, such as forgetting names or appointments. More serious memory loss, however, may be a sign of a brain disorder called Alzheimer's disease, which affects nearly 5 million Americans over the age of 65. At this Web site, you can learn more about Alzheimer's and what you can do to minimize your risk of this devastating illness.

### Alzheimer's Association: What Is Alzheimer's?

<http://www.alz.org/AboutAD/WhatIsAD.asp>

### Directions:

- Click on the link and read the "What Is Alzheimer's?" page.
  - Click on the following links and read the associated pages:
    - Symptoms
    - Causes and Risk Factors
    - Stages
    - Myths
    - Facts and Figures
  - After you have read the information, answer the following questions:
1. Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia. Define dementia.
  2. How long do most people diagnosed with Alzheimer's live?
  3. What is the greatest known risk factor for Alzheimer's?
  4. How can people reduce their risk of developing Alzheimer's?
  5. What drugs do doctors most often use to stop the progress of Alzheimer's?
  6. An older relative confides to you that she is afraid she may be developing Alzheimer's because she has trouble remembering people's names and she often misplaces things like her keys or her wallet. Are symptoms like these warning signs of Alzheimer's?

### Answers:

1. A group of conditions that gradually destroy brain cells and lead to progressive decline in mental function
2. Four to six years after diagnosis
3. Increasing age

4. By taking steps to prevent head injuries, keeping their cardiovascular system in good shape, and following overall strategies for healthy aging.
5. At this time, there is no medical treatment to cure or stop the progression of Alzheimer's disease.
6. No, problems like these reflect the kind of minor memory changes that normally occur with age.

**Additional Links to Explore:**

Use the links below to gather additional information on the activity topic. When appropriate, have students extend their research to include important concepts contained in these Web sites.

**Brain Health**

[http://www.alz.org/we\\_can\\_help\\_brain\\_health\\_maintain\\_your\\_brain.asp](http://www.alz.org/we_can_help_brain_health_maintain_your_brain.asp)

**NIH Senior Health**

<http://nihseniorhealth.gov/listoftopics.html>