

Information for patients

Inherited Disorders Causing Dementia

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For: _____

From: Dr. _____

My father was diagnosed with dementia. Does this mean he has Alzheimer's Disease?

There are many forms of dementia. Alzheimer dementia is the most common and accounts for about two thirds of dementia cases, but not all dementia is Alzheimer's. Another common form of dementia is vascular dementia and results from strokes.

How can I tell one form of dementia from another?

It can be extremely difficult even for specialists, and with multiple investigations. The potential need for specialty referral and investigation should be discussed with the patient's family physician.

If my father has Alzheimer dementia, am I at risk?

Only about 10% of Alzheimer dementia is strongly genetic. In families with strongly genetic Alzheimer dementia, the onset of disease is usually much younger than average (*i.e.*, less than 60) and, there will be affected family members in multiple generations. The risk that offspring will inher-

it the genetic predisposition from an affected parent is 50%.

What are the chances just anyone will get dementia?

About 1% of the population will develop dementia before the age of 60. Before 70, about 4% will, and, by 80, the figure climbs to 18%. By 90 it is 45%.

Can I have a test to determine my risk for Alzheimer dementia?

Genetic tests are currently available only for individuals from families who clearly have the early onset genetic form.

Can I do anything to prevent getting Alzheimer dementia?

There is nothing you can do to reduce your risk for Alzheimer dementia, however, it is possible to reduce your risk for vascular dementia. Appropriate treatment of conditions, such as hypertension, hyperlipidemia and diabetes can reduce the risk for atherosclerotic disease (hardening of the arteries) which is associated with increased incidence of stroke.

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