



# LET'S TALK ABOUT BRAIN HEALTH

THE ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION &  
THE ERIE COUNTY OFFICE OF HEALTH EQUITY

Each day, we make choices that impact our brain health later in life. There are changes you can make at any age to protect your brain. About 1 in 9 Erie County residents ages 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's is a brain disease that causes a slow decline in memory, thinking, and reasoning skills, and can eventually lead to death. Reducing risk factors throughout your life may delay brain health challenges. It's never too early or too late to start thinking about your brain's health.

## WHY BRAIN HEALTH MATTERS TAKING CARE OF YOUR BRAIN

Your brain impacts all areas of your life, from your emotions to how your body moves. Cells called neurons communicate with other areas of your body to keep things running smoothly. Think of your brain as a supercomputer. It processes information and controls everything from your movements to your thoughts.

As you get older, your brain begins to show normal signs of aging like occasionally forgetting what day it is and then remembering later. It can be difficult to know when these changes are normal or when they could mean something more serious is happening. It is important to keep regular appointments with your health care provider so they can help you track any changes.

While there are some things that you cannot control when it comes to your brain health, there are some changes you can make now that may help to lower your risk of developing dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

Research has found that there is a link between heart health and brain health. Doing things to keep your brain healthy could also keep your heart healthy.

No matter your age or health status, you can take steps now to protect your brain. The foods you eat, how often you move your body, and how often you talk to or interact with other people can all impact brain health.

➤➤➤➤ To learn more about heart health, read *Let's Talk About Heart Health* at [erie.gov/health-equity](http://erie.gov/health-equity).



**Dementia** is a general term for loss of memory and other thinking abilities that are severe enough to interfere with daily life. There are a number of causes of dementia. This publication focuses on Alzheimer's disease because it is the most common.



Erie County  
Department of  
Health



Public Health

OFFICE OF HEALTH EQUITY  
[www.erie.gov/health-equity](http://www.erie.gov/health-equity)



ENGLISH

# BRAIN HEALTH TERMS



## COGNITIVE ABILITY

The ability to learn, remember, and understand. This includes following directions, solving problems, or remembering a friend's birthday. It can also include awareness, reasoning skills, judgement, intuition, and language.

## COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT

How we keep our minds active, like listening to music, hobbies, and spending time with friends.

## NORMAL COGNITIVE AGING

Normal cognitive aging often comes with slower thinking and can include changes in memory, difficulty paying attention, and difficulty remembering new information in your mind, like a grocery list or remembering an appointment.

## COGNITIVE DECLINE

Changes in the ability to think that occur as a person ages. Some change is a normal part of aging, but a big change could be a sign of a brain health concern.

## MILD COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT (MCI)

An early stage of memory loss or other noticeable brain health changes such as the ability to learn, understand, or communicate in someone who is still able to perform most daily tasks without help.

# WHAT IS ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE?

Alzheimer's is a brain disease that may cause problems with memory, thinking, and behavior. It is the most common cause of dementia, a general term for memory loss and other symptoms that are severe enough to interfere with daily life. More than 7 million Americans live with Alzheimer's disease.

Alzheimer's usually progresses slowly in three stages: mild, moderate, and severe. Over time, memory loss worsens as individuals become unable to have conversations or respond to their environment. Alzheimer's affects people in different ways.

Each person may experience the stages of Alzheimer's differently.

## DEMENTIA

Dementia is a general term for loss of memory, language, problem-solving, and other thinking abilities that are severe enough to interfere with daily life. Alzheimer's is the most common type of dementia.

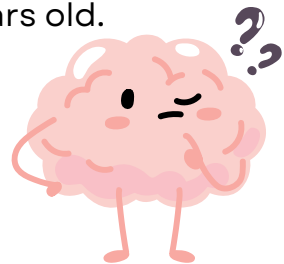
Dementia is not a single disease. It is the general term that describes a collection of symptoms that can be caused by a variety of diseases. These diseases cause damage to brain cells. When brain cells cannot communicate normally, someone's thinking, behavior, and feelings can be affected.

## ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

A type of dementia that causes problems with memory, thinking, and behavior.

## EARLY-ONSET ALZHEIMER'S

Early-onset, or sometimes called younger-onset Alzheimer's, is Alzheimer's disease in someone younger than 65 years old.



# RISK FACTORS

There are multiple risk factors that cause Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Most cases of Alzheimer's and other dementias result from a combination of risk factors.

## AGE

- Increasing age is the greatest risk factor for developing Alzheimer's and other dementias. Most people with Alzheimer's are 65 years old or older.
- While the risk of Alzheimer's disease increases as you age, it is not directly caused by getting older.

## FAMILY HISTORY

- Risk of developing Alzheimer's increases for those who have a parent or sibling with the disease. This risk increases further if more than one family member has Alzheimer's.
- Having a parent or sibling with Alzheimer's does not necessarily mean you will develop Alzheimer's.

## GENETICS

- Humans pass genes from parent to child. If you have a gene that causes Alzheimer's, you are at greater risk for developing the disease.

## HEAD INJURY

- There is a link between a history of head injuries and an increased risk of dementia. A concussion is an example of a head injury.

## CERTAIN MEDICAL CONDITIONS

- There is a connection between brain health and heart health. Many of the same conditions that impact heart health also impact brain health.

### EARLY DETECTION MATTERS!



While there is no known cure for Alzheimer's yet, there are approved medications that can slow the disease down. An early diagnosis gives you access to more treatment options and more time to plan for the future.

Schedule routine appointments with a primary care provider to track brain health changes.

## STAGES OF ALZHEIMER'S

### ASYMPTOMATIC

Brain changes related to Alzheimer's disease can begin years before you notice any signs.

### MILD COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT (MCI)

Symptoms of cognitive decline start to appear.

### MILD DEMENTIA

Symptoms interfere with some daily activities.

### MODERATE DEMENTIA

Symptoms are more noticeable & interfere with many daily activities.

### SEVERE DEMENTIA

Symptoms interfere with all or most everyday activities.



# CHANGES YOU CAN MAKE

You can lower your risk for cognitive decline through the choices you make each day.

## CHALLENGE YOUR MIND

Do something new! Learn a new skill or try something artistic. Challenging your mind may have short- and long-term benefits for your brain health.



**Buffalo and Erie County Public Library**

<https://bit.ly/BECPLhours>

## KEEP LEARNING!

Education reduces the risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Encourage youth to stay in school. Continue your own education by taking classes at your local library or college or online. Your municipality may offer free community education classes and workshops.



**Erie County University Express**

[erie.gov/universityexpress](http://erie.gov/universityexpress)

## GET MOVING

Moving your body regularly can reduce the risk of cognitive decline. It can improve memory and help you think, learn, and problem-solve.



**Erie County Senior Services Club 99**

<https://www3.erie.gov/seniorservices/club-99>

## PROTECT YOUR HEAD

Head injuries increase Alzheimer's risk. Help prevent head injury by wearing a helmet when biking or playing sports. Wear a seat belt when in the car. Do what you can to prevent falling.



**PAL Free Bike Helmet Giveaway Program**

[bit.ly/PALBikeHelmet](http://bit.ly/PALBikeHelmet)

## EAT MORE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Eating healthier foods can help reduce your risk of cognitive decline.



**Read *Let's Talk About Food Access*:**

[www.erie.gov/health-equity](http://www.erie.gov/health-equity)

## STAY CONNECTED

Socializing can boost attention and memory and help to strengthen brain health. Spend time with family and friends, join a club or group, or get involved in your community.

## MANAGE STRESS

Many people use cigarettes, alcohol, cannabis or other substances to deal with stress. These things can cause serious health problems. People who quit smoking can lower their risk of cognitive decline.



**New York State Quitline**

[www.nysmokefree.com/services](http://www.nysmokefree.com/services)

## MANAGE BLOOD PRESSURE

High blood pressure, especially untreated, can increase your risk of cognitive decline. Check your blood pressure regularly. If you have high blood pressure, work with your health care provider to find out what treatment options work for you.

## MANAGE DIABETES

Type 2 diabetes can increase your risk of Alzheimer's. Risk also increases with the length of time someone has diabetes and how severe it is. Work with your health care provider to find out about testing and treatment options.



**Read *Let's Talk About Diabetes*:**

[www.erie.gov/health-equity](http://www.erie.gov/health-equity)

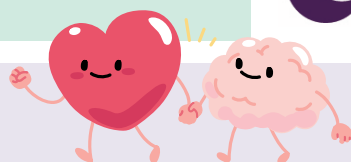
## GET ENOUGH SLEEP

Quality sleep is important for brain health. Create a bedtime routine to help you wind down before bed.

- Limit screen time before bed.
- Find a comfortable temperature for sleep.
- Try to limit things that will disrupt your sleep, like noise and light.



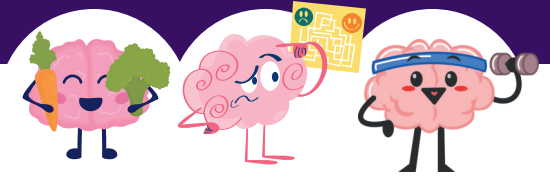
## HEART HEALTH



What is good for your heart is often also good for your brain health. One of the heart's jobs is to pump blood throughout your body. The blood carries nutrients that your brain and body need. It also carries oxygen that is important for good brain health.

Learn more about heart health by reading *Let's Talk About Heart Health*: [www.erie.gov/health-equity](http://www.erie.gov/health-equity)

# WHAT YOU EAT MATTERS



The food you eat affects your body. Eating a balanced diet may lower your risk for a number of health problems, including Alzheimer's disease. Research tells us that what is good for the heart is also good for the brain.

The **Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH)** eating plan is a simple, heart-healthy diet that can help prevent or lower high blood pressure. The **Mediterranean diet** is a fruit- and vegetable-focused heart-healthy diet that can help lower the risk of heart disease and support brain health.

**Eating healthy can get expensive!** Save money on groceries by buying frozen foods. Canned beans and vegetables can save lots of time in the kitchen. Remember to drain and rinse canned beans and vegetables to get rid of added salt or choose "low sodium" or "no salt added" options. To learn more about accessing healthy foods on a budget, visit [erie.gov/health-equity](http://erie.gov/health-equity) and look for *Let's Talk About Food Access*.

## HEALTHY BRAIN FOOD TIPS

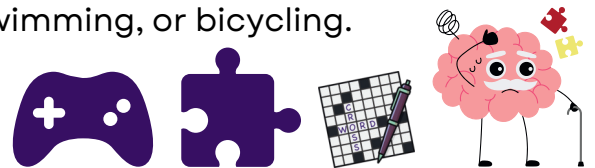
- Fill your plate with lots of fruits and vegetables
- Eat nuts, beans, and whole grains to feel full
- Choose lean meats, fish, and poultry
- Try replacing butter with olive oil
- Taste food before adding salt
- Use herbs and spices to boost flavor
- Limit sugary drinks, sweets, and alcohol

# MOVE YOUR BODY

For most people, any increase in physical activity can have an effect on their overall health. Find ways to build more movement into your day. Engage in activities that raise your heart rate. An increased heart rate increases blood flow throughout your body and to your brain, carrying extra nutrients important to your brain's health. Try walking, dancing, stretching, gardening, playing sports, doing housework, mowing the lawn, swimming, or bicycling.



# CHALLENGE YOUR MIND



Participate in activities that expose your mind to new topics. You can do this by trying a new hobby, learning a new skill, or studying a new language. You can also play brain-challenging games like chess, tabletop games, video games, word puzzles, jigsaws, crosswords, sudoku, and memory games. Try a variety of challenges to see what you enjoy. Choosing activities you like will help keep you interested and increase the chance that you will keep with it.

# MANAGE YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE



You can manage your blood pressure by making heart healthy food choices, moving your body, and discussing medication management with your doctor. However, sometimes stress has a big impact on blood pressure. Choose positive ways to manage stress like meditation, journaling, talking to a trusted friend, or practicing hobbies you enjoy. Your local library has tons of great hobby ideas. Practice mindfulness through deep breathing, listening to music, or finding a quiet moment to relax. To learn more about mindfulness, visit: <https://www3.erie.gov/health/mindfulness>



# 10 EARLY SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

**Signs** are normally visible or can be measured. **Symptoms** are conditions you may feel or notice but that others might not see. Everyone is unique. Signs of good health for you may be different from someone else. Your overall health may also be impacted by medications, health conditions and family history. Contact a health care provider if you notice any of these signs in yourself or a loved one. Talk to your provider to learn more about your unique signs and symptoms.

## 1 MEMORY LOSS THAT DISRUPTS DAILY LIFE

- Forgetting information you just learned
- Forgetting important dates or events
- Asking the same question over and over
- Relying on reminder notes, electronic devices, or family members to remember

*A typical sign of aging: forgetting a name but remembering it later*

## 2 CHALLENGES IN PLANNING OR SOLVING PROBLEMS

- Trouble making and following a plan
- Trouble keeping track of numbers
- Trouble concentrating
- Taking longer to do things than you did before

*A typical sign of aging: making occasional mistakes when managing money or paying bills*

## 3 DIFFICULTY COMPLETING FAMILIAR TASKS

- Daily tasks are harder to get done
- Trouble driving to a familiar place
- Forgetting the rules to a favorite game

*A typical sign of aging: occasionally needing help to use microwave settings*

## 4 CONFUSION WITH TIME OR PLACE

- Losing track of dates or seasons
- Trouble understanding something that is not happening in that moment
- Forgetting where you are or how you got there

*A typical sign of aging: getting confused about the day of the week but figuring it out later*

## 5 TROUBLE UNDERSTANDING VISUAL IMAGES & SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS

- Changes in vision that affect balance
- Trouble reading
- Trouble judging distance or color contrast that could affect driving

*A typical sign of aging: vision changes related to cataracts*



## FIND SUPPORT

## THE ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION 24/7 HELPLINE

Contact Alzheimer's Association for reliable, FREE information and support, 24 hours a day. Connect with a live person who can provide information, local resources, crisis assistance, and emotional support.

**CALL: 1-800-272-3900 VISIT: ALZ.ORG/HELPLINE** \*Available in 200+ languages and TRS.



## 6 NEW PROBLEMS WITH WORDS IN SPEAKING OR WRITING

- Trouble with following or joining a conversation
- Stopping in the middle of a conversation or repeating yourself
- Trouble naming a familiar object or using the wrong name for something. Example: calling a watch a “hand-clock”

*A typical sign of aging: sometimes having trouble finding the right word*

## 7 MISPLACING THINGS & LOSING THE ABILITY TO RETRACE STEPS

- Putting things in unusual places
- Being unable to go back over your steps to find something that was misplaced
- Accusing someone of stealing a misplaced object

*A typical sign of aging: occasionally misplacing something and retracing your steps to find it*

## 8 DECREASED OR POOR JUDGMENT

- Changes in judgment or decision-making
- Poor decision-making with money
- Paying less attention to staying clean

*A typical sign of aging: Making a bad decision or mistake once in a while, like not changing the oil in your car*

## 9 NOT PARTICIPATING IN SOCIAL OR WORK ACTIVITIES

- Trouble keeping up with a favorite sports team or activity
- Withdrawing from hobbies or other social activities because of difficulty having or following a conversation

*A typical sign of aging: sometimes feeling uninterested in family or social life*

## 10 CHANGES IN MOOD & PERSONALITY

- Mood and personality changes
- Becoming confused, suspicious, fearful, or anxious
- Becoming upset easily at home, with friends, or when out of your comfort zone

*A typical sign of aging: having very specific ways of doing things and becoming irritated when a routine is disrupted*



## LET'S TALK

If you notice behavior, memory, or thinking changes in someone close to you, it can be difficult to know what to do or say. It is normal to be unsure or nervous about how to offer support. The Alzheimer's Association has a guide to help you feel more confident and prepared to have a conversation and take action. For more information, visit: [www.alz.org/10steps](http://www.alz.org/10steps)

# DIAGNOSING ALZHEIMER'S

It is important to tell your health care provider about any changes in your memory when you notice them. Getting checked by your doctor can help determine what is causing symptoms. If Alzheimer's is the cause, an early diagnosis allows you access to treatment options, opportunities to participate in clinical trials, an opportunity to make choices to support brain health, and more time to plan for the future.



There is no single test that can tell if you are living with Alzheimer's disease or another type of dementia. There are multiple ways your doctor can evaluate your memory and thinking. A brain health evaluation may require several visits to complete and you may need to see more than one doctor.

Some health conditions, like depression or sleep problems, can cause symptoms that look like dementia. Telling your health care provider about any signs or symptoms will help them decide if you are experiencing dementia or something else.

**If you are concerned about Alzheimer's disease, tell your doctor, "I have been noticing [name the symptom]. Can you check me for Alzheimer's disease?"**



## WHAT TO EXPECT AT YOUR APPOINTMENT

Your health care provider will ask you about signs or symptoms you have noticed. You can prepare to answer these kinds of questions:

- What signs or symptoms have you or someone close to you noticed?
- When did they begin?
- How often do they happen?
- Have they gotten worse?



## QUICK TIPS

- 1** Write a list of questions you want to remember to ask and bring that to your appointments.
- 2** Bring a trusted friend or family member with you to help listen and make you feel more comfortable.
- 3** Ask your health care provider to repeat things and explain medical terms.
- 4** Ask for a written summary of your visit for your own records.

## PHYSICAL EXAM AND MEDICAL HISTORY

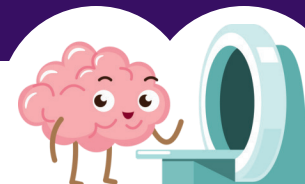
Your health care provider will review your medical history and ask you about medical conditions that your family members have experienced. This helps them figure out if dementia or chronic illness runs in your family. During this visit, your health care provider may:

- Check your blood pressure, temperature, pulse, and weight
- Review all of the medications you are taking
- Ask you about your diet and if you drink alcohol, smoke, or use substances
- Ask you about your mental health history
- Listen to your heart and lungs
- Collect urine or blood samples for testing
- Recommend additional testing

**It is important to be open and honest with your health care provider so they have all of the information they need to make a diagnosis.**



# TESTING



Health care providers use many different tests to determine if someone has a form of dementia. Some of these tests may be performed by your primary health care provider. Other tests may be performed by an imaging technician, neurologist, or neuropsychologist.

## NEUROLOGICAL EXAMS

During a neurological exam, a health care provider will look for signs of conditions other than Alzheimer's that may impair memory or thinking. Your doctor may test your:

- Reflexes
- Coordination, muscle tone, and strength
- Eye movement
- Speech
- Sensation (like touch, temperature, pain)

## DEPRESSION SCREEN AND MOOD ASSESSMENT

Your health care provider will ask about your well-being to find out if your symptoms are caused by a mood disorder like depression. Mood disorders may cause symptoms that look like dementia.

## BRAIN IMAGING (MRI OR CT)

Your health care provider may order brain imaging to look for signs of conditions other than Alzheimer's. Brain imaging is painless but often takes around 30 minutes. Your provider may recommend one of two types of imaging tests:

- **A CT scan** uses X-rays to provide detailed pictures of the brain.
- **An MRI** uses radio waves and a large magnet to create detailed images of the brain. Your head will be inside a small space while MRI images are taken. The machine can be noisy.

## GENETIC TESTING

Although genetic tests are available for some genes that directly cause Alzheimer's, health care professionals do not recommend genetic testing. Genetic indicators of Alzheimer's only account for a very small percentage of people living with Alzheimer's.

## COGNITIVE, FUNCTIONAL & BEHAVIORAL TESTS

Cognitive and functional tests examine your memory, thinking, and problem-solving abilities. Behavioral tests assess changes in behaviors and symptoms. Some of these tests are quick, while others are longer and more complex. These tests typically have names with letters and numbers like AD8 and MMSE. Some cognitive testing may be done using a computer, tablet, or with electrodes (small plastic patches) placed on your scalp.

## CEREBROSPINAL FLUID (CSF) TESTS

CSF is a clear fluid in your brain and spinal cord. You can think of it as a cushion that protects your brain and spinal cord from injury. Alzheimer's disease may cause changes in your CSF. Health care providers can take samples of CSF through a medical procedure, called a spinal tap or lumbar puncture, where a special needle is used to take the sample of fluid from the lower back. This procedure is done with numbing medication delivered by a shot in the area of the procedure.

## BLOOD TESTS

There are blood tests that may show changes in the brain, the presence of brain diseases, or brain damage. Health care providers who specialize in treating patients with memory problems can use blood tests along with other types of tests to diagnose and treat health issues.

## HOME TESTS FOR DEMENTIA ARE NOT RECOMMENDED

You may see ads for at-home tests for dementia. None of these tests have been scientifically proven to be accurate. A thorough examination by a health care provider is the best way to learn more about your brain health.



# STAYING SAFE

If you or a loved one is diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, consider creating a safety plan. Your safety plan may change as the disease progresses. Starting to make changes to improve safety early on can help the person with Alzheimer's feel less overwhelmed and stay independent longer.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN MAKING A SAFETY PLAN:

### HOME SAFETY

A person living with Alzheimer's can live safely in their own home or a caregiver's home with some simple and inexpensive changes. Here are some examples of changes you can make to improve the safety of your home for someone living with Alzheimer's:

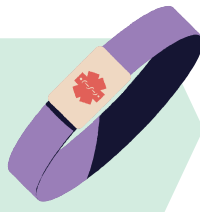
- Use kitchen appliances with an automatic shut-off feature or smart home connection.
- Keep medications in a locked drawer or cabinet and restrict who has access.
- Install latches or deadbolts locks above or below eye level on doors so that it is less likely a person living with Alzheimer's will exit through that door.

**Erie County Senior Services** has a free home safety self-assessment tool. For more information, visit: [www3.erie.gov/seniorservices/home-safety-assessment](http://www3.erie.gov/seniorservices/home-safety-assessment)

### DRIVING

At some point, a person living with Alzheimer's will no longer be able to drive safely. As a caregiver, family member, or friend, plan to have a conversation about how to handle this when it happens and make a plan for who will make decisions about driving privileges. Look into different transportation options before driving is no longer a safe option. Talk with your health care provider about options for getting to health care appointments.

**A medical alert bracelet** can help emergency service responders understand a person's medical needs in an emergency situation.



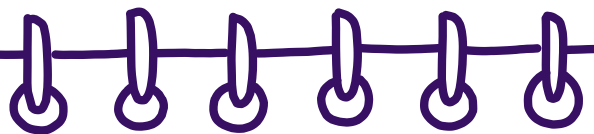
### WANDERING

6 in 10 people living with dementia will wander at least once.

One of the signs of Alzheimer's is forgetting where you are or how you got there. People living with Alzheimer's do not always recognize places that were once familiar to them and can become confused about where they are.

Here are some tips to reduce the risk of wandering:

- Reassure the person if they feel lost, alone, or confused.
- If the person is no longer able to drive safely, remove their access to vehicles and car keys.
- Install bells above doors to signal when a door is opened or use smart home sensors to monitor when people enter or exit.

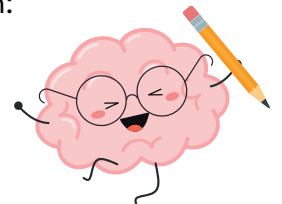


## SAFETY TIPS

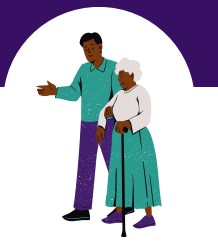
For more safety tips on:

- Medication safety
- Technology
- Traveling
- Abuse and neglect

Visit: [alz.org/safety](http://alz.org/safety)



# SUPPORTING YOURSELF WHILE YOU CARE FOR YOUR LOVED ONE



If you are a caregiver for someone living with Alzheimer's or another dementia, it is important to take care of yourself. It is important to remember that there is stress that comes with caring for a loved one living with Alzheimer's or another dementia and to take care of yourself too!

## SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVERS

Support groups offer confidential and caring environments where you can talk to people who are going through the same thing as you. There are in-person and virtual meetings.

**The Alzheimer's Association** offers local support groups and education programs for caregivers. To find Alzheimer's Association support or services near you, visit: [www.alz.org/events](http://www.alz.org/events).

**New York State Office for the Aging** has support for caregivers. For more information, visit: [aging.ny.gov/programs/caring-loved-one](http://aging.ny.gov/programs/caring-loved-one).

**Erie County Senior Services** has support services for caregivers, including a calendar of free dementia respite programs and a home safety self-assessment tool. For more information, visit: [erie.gov/seniorservices/caregiving](http://erie.gov/seniorservices/caregiving).

## ERIE PATH

Erie Path is Erie County's smartphone app that helps link people with resources that can benefit adults and caregivers.



For more information, visit: [erie.gov/eriepath](http://erie.gov/eriepath)

## 211 WNY

211 WNY is a 24/7, free and confidential link to health and human services information. Callers can connect to services related to mental health, support groups, emergency housing, and more.

For more information, dial 2-1-1 or text 898211.



# BUILD A SELF-CARE ACTION PLAN

Being a caregiver can be stressful. As you care for your loved one, it is important to take care of yourself too. It can be hard to remember to do that in the moment, so consider creating a plan for ways to take care of yourself. This will look different from person to person. Do what works for you.

Make a written list of things you can do to take care of yourself. Having this list will make self-care decisions easier when you are tired or stressed.

**COGNITIVE SELF-CARE:** Things you can do to take care of your mind.

*Examples: Read a book or magazine, learn a new skill, play chess*

**EMOTIONAL SELF-CARE:** Things you can do to take care of your feelings including grief.

*Examples: Journal, talk with a trusted person or a professional about your feelings*

It is okay to grieve the life you knew before Alzheimer's. For grief support, read *Let's Talk About Grief* at [erie.gov/health-equity](http://erie.gov/health-equity).

**PHYSICAL SELF-CARE:** Things you can do to take care of your body.

*Examples: Stretch, go for a walk, keep routine appointments with your primary care provider, take a nap or head to bed early*

**SOCIAL SELF-CARE:** Things you can do to build community.

*Examples: Spend time with friends, join a social group, attend a community event*

**SPIRITUAL SELF-CARE:** Things you can do to nurture your inner beliefs and values.

*Examples: Meditate, pray, create a peaceful practice of your own*

# WAGES AND SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVING

Some government programs will pay wages for family or friends of people with disabilities to help with daily activities, including personal care, giving medicine, cooking, cleaning, and more. Other programs offer subsidy for transportation, meals, day care, and more.



## Ways to receive wages and support for caregiving:

- Become a paid caregiver through the New York State Medicaid program.
- Get paid as a caregiver through a long-term care insurance policy.
- Apply for paid family leave through the New York State labor office.
- Look into the wide range of supports available from the local Area Agency on Aging (AAA), Erie County Senior Services. Visit: [erie.gov/seniorservices/caregiving](http://erie.gov/seniorservices/caregiving)
- Apply for programs available to people caring for veterans, including wages for caregiving and respite services.

For more information, visit: [www.usa.gov/disability-caregiver](http://www.usa.gov/disability-caregiver)

## FIND YOUR LOCAL ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION CHAPTER



The Western New York chapter of the Alzheimer's Association provides education programs, support groups, and other resources for those living with dementia and their caregivers in all eight counties of WNY, including Erie. You can contact your local chapter for many things, including:

**Diagnosis and treatment:** Your local chapter can provide a comprehensive list of providers that specialize in dementia diagnosis and care. They can answer questions you have about specific needs.

**Support programs, education, and events:** Your local chapter can provide information on support programs and connect you to educational materials and events that support people living with dementia and their caregivers.

**CALL: 716-626-0600 VISIT: [ALZ.ORG/WNY](http://ALZ.ORG/WNY)**

For immediate help, call the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 helpline: 1-800-272-3900

## HELPFUL NUMBERS TO SAVE IN YOUR PHONE CONTACTS

Poison Control ..... 1-800-222-1222  
New York State Emergency Alerts ..... Text your county name (Erie) to 333111  
988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline ..... Dial 988  
The Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline ..... 1-800-272-3900



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## ERIE COUNTY OFFICE OF HEALTH EQUITY

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The Erie County Office of Health Equity's vision is for everyone in Erie County to achieve maximum health and wellness. The Office of Health Equity is located within the Erie County Department of Health.

**Want to learn more?**

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Email us at [HealthEquity@erie.gov](mailto:HealthEquity@erie.gov)



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