Early Detection Matters

1. Memory changes that disrupt daily life
2. Challenges in planning or solving problems
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks
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

Northfield: Becoming a Dementia-friendly Community

Nearly one in every three seniors who dies each year has Alzheimer’s or another dementia.

Resources

NATIONAL RESOURCE:
- Alzheimer’s Association: www.alz.org
  1-800-272-3900 (including 24/7 helpline)

LOCAL RESOURCES:
- ACT Northfield Community Outreach Program:
  Visit our website for current happenings:
  www.actonalz.org/northfield
- Local presentations on Dementia Awareness:
  Email northfieldact@gmail.com to arrange a speaker for your organization. Presentations can be 30 to 60 minutes.
- Northfield Public Library:
  Alzheimer’s resource library
- Alzheimer’s Association:
  Alzheimer’s resource library
  www.alz.org

NORTHFIELD CAREGIVER SUPPORT:
- Northfield Senior Center - caregiver support:
  Memory Café:
  www.northfieldseniorcenter.org
  Meets 4th Monday of the month from 1:30-3:30pm. Call (507) 664-3707.
- Three Links Care Giver Support Group:
  www.threelinks.org
  Meets 2nd Wednesday of every month from 4:00-5:00pm. Call (507) 664-8821.
- Vital Link Adult Day Center:
  www.threelinks.org/care-services/adult-day-services
  8:00-3:00 M-F • Call (507) 664-8824.
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  www.threelinks.org/care-services/adult-day-services
  8:00-3:00 M-F • Call (507) 664-8824.

Northfield’s Walk To End Alzheimer’s is Sunday, September 27th, 2015.
Registration: 1:00pm at the Northfield Retirement Community; Walk start: 2:00pm
Held in conjunction with the Alzheimer’s Association. Northfield’s walk is one in 600 communities nationwide generating awareness and financial support for Alzheimer’s care and research. Contact Emily at ekerling@northfieldretirement.org

Ardy is a caregiver

Her husband, Jim, was a beloved English teacher at Northfield High School. He also was the announcer at local sporting events. He sang in the church choir. Jim Koehler died from Alzheimer’s disease.

Jim began misplacing things. His personality changed. Ardy was concerned that something was wrong. After all, she and Jim had been married for nearly 45 years. She knew his behavior and habits. She took him to a local clinic, he was referred to specialists, and he was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease.

When he was first diagnosed, his friends had trouble believing it. Jim seemed the same to them in casual conversation. But Jim wasn’t the same.

Ardy cared for Jim at home for about ten years. Then, they were both seriously injured in an automobile accident. Jim was admitted for rehabilitation/transitional care and physical therapy and then transferred to Memory Care at Three Links for a year and a half. As Ardy became strong enough to again care for Jim, he went home. But she relied on Adult Day Services providing six hours of care two days a week for Jim. It included transportation, socialization, meals, enrichment activities, and offered bathing, which was physically challenging at home. Caring for someone with memory loss requires 24-hour care. Jim couldn’t be left alone. Adult Day Services was a blessing.

Normal activities outside the home were limited for Ardy. Grocery store outings provided exercise and food. Special friendships were forged with a group of friends referred to as the “list of five.” Ardy could count on these five key people when she needed them. Jim’s “five” would take him for coffee, for a walk in the neighborhood, or just to visit.

Ardy has never regretted caring for Jim at home. She is a natural caregiver. She is now a member of and advocate for the Northfield Senior Center’s Memory Café program. Ardy says the program is, “...a neutral, welcoming environment for those living with memory loss. It’s not health care oriented. It’s a place to come, talk, have fun, and receive support.” She participates in the Memory Café, “...to provide support to caregivers in Jim’s memory.”

Ardy is active with Northfield’s ACT because she knows that community awareness is important. So is early diagnosis of the disease. When Alzheimer’s disease is diagnosed, families need support, accurate information, and access to community resources.

Know the 10 Signs From the Alzheimer’s Association

1. Memory changes that disrupt daily life
2. Challenges in planning or solving problems
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Northfield ACT Partners

- Rice County Social Services
- Northfield Chamber of Commerce
- Three Links
- Northfield Senior Center
- Northfield Hospital EMS
- City of Northfield


Is Northfield ready? Learn about ACT on Alzheimer’s.

Over 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer’s and as many as 16 million will have the disease in 2050.
ACT on Alzheimer’s is a volunteer driven, statewide collaboration preparing Minnesota for the impacts of Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias. Northfield’s effort began in early 2014. A small group of local, committed volunteers are ACTing to meet the spiraling needs related to Alzheimer’s disease. ACT also provides support to residents in our community who both have the disease and those who are caring for someone with the disease. This group has come together under ACT on Alzheimer’s, Northfield being one of 33 ACT communities statewide, as well as 60+ nonprofit, governmental, and private organizations.

Action Team volunteers assessed current strengths and gaps in meeting local community needs by interviewing local community leaders, business people, government officials, and health care providers. From the analysis of those responses, the issues that these stakeholders emphasized were put into a plan – an action plan that sets Northfield’s ACT on Alzheimer’s community goals. And a plan that motivates Northfield to action.

Throughout 2015, the ACT Action Team is concentrating its efforts on these goals:

1. An education and awareness effort within Northfield about Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias, including the faith community, service clubs, community business leaders, and youth.

2. Easily accessible resources to assist those diagnosed with the disease to provide information and support to their families.

3. Better awareness by emergency and disaster personnel of the needs of those with the disease and inclusion/attention to those with the disease in city and county disaster planning.

4. A Physician Outreach Program is working with local health professionals toward early detection, developing a dementia referral path once the disease is diagnosed, and providing community support.

ACT on Alzheimer’s is creating connections

Northfield Hospital & Clinics is excited to be working with ACT on Alzheimer’s to promote early recognition of dementia and creating paths to connect people to the resources they need. In many communities, patients, families, and healthcare providers alike feel as if they are on an island as they work to obtain services and information. If services are present, they are often hard to find or coordinate. ACT on Alzheimer’s can help Northfield be a leader by working to connect these many islands.

Join us in supporting these efforts to make Northfield a dementia-friendly community.

Northfield Hospital & Clinics are working with Northfield ACT’s Physician Outreach Program. In addition, the hospital’s Emergency Medical Services personnel are being trained to become more dementia aware as they respond to emergencies in our community.

Local Alzheimer’s numbers and the economic impact

2010 U.S. Census Bureau numbers confirm that there are over 2,400 people in the city of Northfield (both Dakota and Rice Counties) over age 65. Based on Alzheimer’s Association estimates, that means that over 400 people in Northfield have the disease. Statewide over 89,000 Minnesotans over the age of 65 live with Alzheimer’s.

Many of these people live alone. Two-thirds of those with Alzheimer’s are women; two-thirds of the caregivers are also women. These unpaid Minnesota caregivers provide 277 million hours of care, valued at $3.4 billion annually.

Alzheimer’s disease is the only cause of death in the top 10 that cannot be prevented, cured, or slowed. As a result, this year, nationally, the direct costs of caring for those with Alzheimer’s will total an estimated $226 billion, including $153 billion in costs to Medicare and Medicaid. Medicare spending for the average person with dementia is three times higher than for seniors without dementia. Medicaid payments are 19 times higher. One in five Medicare dollars are spent on people with Alzheimer’s. Estimates are that in 2050, one in three Medicare dollars will be spent on seniors with Alzheimer’s and other dementias.

Alzheimer’s disease affects everyone in Minnesota. It is one type of dementia but it makes up 70% of all dementias.

Early diagnosis can help

ACT is doing a great job in getting the word out about the prevalence of dementia in our community. Instead of seeing a dementia diagnosis as a “shameful secret,” it becomes a signal to marshal community resources on behalf of a person diagnosed with dementia. This involves combining the resources and experience of the Alzheimer’s Association, the long term care and assisted living facilities, home care, hospital, clinics, churches, the police force, and area businesses. The list goes on and on as we consider how each part of the community can offer support to people and their families who are diagnosed with dementia.

While no one wants to hear that they or their loved one has dementia, an early diagnosis is important to assist a person with dementia to get the help they need to thrive. It prevents unnecessary hospitalizations and helps patients and families plan for the future. Make an appointment with your local primary care provider if you’re worried that you or your loved one has symptoms of memory loss.

Mary Carlson visits Allina Health Northfield patients who reside in local assisted living facilities. She works with Geriatric Services of Minnesota colleagues Steven Lawler, MD and Janice Roetzell, RN CNP to provide care to area nursing home residents.

MARY CARLSON, CNP, RN, Allina Health Clinics, Northfield