



# Amaranth Foundation

## Loss, Grief & Alzheimer's

A feeling of *Loss* is the sense that 'all is not well' produced by an event perceived by those involved as negative; *Grief* is the emotional response to a loss that may be tangible (actual and physical) or intangible (perceived or psychological). It expresses itself physically, emotionally cognitively, behaviourally and spiritually.

It is common for caregivers to have feelings of loss and grief as their life is changed by Alzheimer's. Alzheimer's gradually takes away the person you know and love. As this happens you mourn him/her and experience grief.

*Anticipatory grief* is the emotional pain of losing someone, felt in advance of the person's death. It may be experienced at any time by any one connected to someone with Alzheimer's, but it is especially common at the middle and late stages of the disease.

Friends and family cope with the feelings of loss for someone who is still alive together with the ambiguous loss of interacting with someone who is not fully present socially or psychologically. Friends, family and caregivers are in mourning even as they are still doing the hard work of taking care of someone with a difficult disease.

### Common Grief Reactions

#### **Feelings:**

sadness, anger, guilt, self-reproach, anxiety, helplessness, shock, yearning, emancipation, relief, numbness

#### **Physical Sensations:**

hollowness in the stomach, tightness in the chest, tightness in the throat, oversensitive to noise, as sense of depersonalisation, breathlessness, feeling short of breath, weakness in the muscles, lack of energy, dry mouth

#### **Cognitions:**

disbelief, confusion, preoccupation, sense of presence, hallucinations

#### **Behaviours:**

sleep disturbances, appetite disturbances, absent minded behaviour, social withdrawal, dreams of the deceased, avoiding reminders of the deceased, searching and calling out, sighing, restless hyperactivity, crying, visiting places or carrying objects that remind the survivor of the deceased

### What can you do?

Know that you are feeling 'real' grief; rely on a support network for an emotional outlet and know that support is available. Amaranth Foundation therapists are Mental Health accredited Social Workers who provide counselling and support, both formal and informal, for the person, their family and their caregivers.

A best friend is the only one that  
walks into your life when the  
world has walked out.  
Shannon L. Alder

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# Alzheimer's is a disease.

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The terms **Dementia** and **Alzheimer's** are frequently interchanged in conversations. However, they are not the same thing.

**Dementia** is a group of symptoms; it is not a disease. The group of symptoms affect mental tasks such as memory and reasoning. It can be caused by a variety of conditions, the most common of which is **Alzheimer's** disease. You can have a form of dementia that is completely unrelated to Alzheimer's disease.

(<http://www.healthline.com/health/alzheimers-disease>)

Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia, affecting up to 70% of all people with dementia.

It was first recorded in 1907 by Dr Alois Alzheimer. Dr Alzheimer reported the case of Auguste Deter, a middle-aged woman with dementia and specific changes in her brain. For the next 60 years Alzheimer's disease was considered a rare condition that affected people under the age of 65. It was not until the 1970s that Dr Robert Katzman declared (rather boldly at the time) that "senile dementia" and Alzheimer's disease were the same condition and that neither were a normal part of aging.

Alzheimer's disease can be either sporadic or familial.

*Sporadic Alzheimer's* disease can affect adults at any age, but usually occurs after age 65 and is the most common form of Alzheimer's disease.

*Familial Alzheimer's* disease is a very rare genetic condition, caused by a mutation in one of several genes. The presence of mutated genes means that the person will eventually develop Alzheimer's disease, usually in their 40's or 50's.

Alzheimer's is a progressive disease of the brain that slowly impairs memory and cognitive function. The exact cause is unknown and there is no cure.

Damage to the brain begins years before symptoms show. Abnormal protein deposits form plaques and tangles in the brain of someone with Alzheimer's disease. Connections between cells are lost and they begin to die. In advanced cases, the brain shows significant shrinkage.

## Symptoms

In the early stages the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease can be very subtle. However, it often begins with lapses in memory and difficulty in finding the right words for everyday objects.

Other symptoms may include:

- Persistent and frequent memory difficulties, especially of recent events
- Vagueness in everyday conversation
- Apparent loss of enthusiasm for previously enjoyed activities
- Taking longer to do routine tasks
- Forgetting well-known people or places
- Inability to process questions and instructions
- Deterioration of social skills
- Emotional unpredictability

Symptoms vary and the disease progresses at a different pace according to the individual and the areas of the brain affected. A person's abilities may fluctuate from day to day, or even within the one day, becoming worse in times of stress, fatigue or ill-health.

The rate of progression of the disease varies from person to person. However, the disease does lead eventually to complete dependence and finally death, usually from another illness such as pneumonia. A person may live from three to twenty years with Alzheimer's disease, with the average being seven to ten years.

## Diagnosis

A series of tests will help to eliminate other conditions with similar symptoms such as nutritional deficiencies or depression. After eliminating other causes, a clinical diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease can be made with about 80% to 90% accuracy if the symptoms and signs are appropriate. The diagnosis can only be confirmed after death by examination of the brain tissue.

It is important to have an early and accurate diagnosis to determine whether a treatable condition other than Alzheimer's disease, is causing the symptoms.

## Treatment

At present there is no cure for Alzheimer's disease. However, one group of drugs called cholinergic drugs appears to be providing some temporary improvement in cognitive functioning for some people with mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease.

Drugs can also be prescribed for secondary symptoms such as restlessness or depression or to help the person with dementia sleep better. Community support is available for the person with Alzheimer's disease, their families and carers.

# Foods and Alzheimers Disease

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Studies have shown that while some foods boost memory, others actually increase risks for Alzheimer's disease.

Here's a list of foods linked to increased rates of Alzheimer's disease:

- **Processed cheeses**, including American cheese, mozzarella sticks, Cheez Whiz and Laughing Cow. These foods build up proteins in the body that have been associated with Alzheimer's.
- **Processed meats**, such as bacon, smoked turkey from the deli counter and ham. Smoked meats like these contain nitrosamines, which cause the liver to produce fats that are toxic to the brain.
- **Beer**. Most beers contain nitrites, which have been linked to Alzheimer's.
- **White foods**, including pasta, cakes, white sugar, white rice and white bread. Consuming these causes a spike in insulin production and sends toxins to the brain.
- **Microwave popcorn** contains diacetyl, a chemical that may increase amyloid plaques in the brain. Research has linked a buildup of amyloid plaques to Alzheimer's disease.

<http://www.alzheimers.net/2014-01-02/foods-that-induce-memory-loss/>

Foods that fight Alzheimer's:-

- **Vegetables**, especially leafy greens like spinach, kale, turnip greens and cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, which have been strongly linked to lower

levels of cognitive decline in older age, according to a study in the Annals of Neurology.

- **Salmon and other cold-water fish**, such as halibut, tuna, mackerel and sardines, which are rich in omega-3 fatty acids. Other omega-3 sources include beans, some nuts, flax seeds and healthy oils, like olive oil.
- **Berries and dark-skinned fruits** which are rich in antioxidants. According to the Alzheimer's Association, some of the fruits that pack the most punch are blueberries, blackberries, strawberries, raspberries, plums, oranges, red grapes and cherries.
- **Coffee and chocolate** are surprisingly good for you. Recent studies have shown that caffeine and coffee can be used as therapeutics against Alzheimer's disease. The caffeine and antioxidants in these two tasty treats may help ward off age-related memory impairment, along with cinnamon, olive oil and curry.
- **Extra virgin olive oil** contains a substance called oleocanthal that helps boost the production of key proteins and enzymes that help break down the amyloid plaques associated with Alzheimer's disease.
- **Cold-pressed virgin coconut oil** is a heart-healthy oil that is free of cholesterol and trans-fats, and boosts ketones. Coconut oil has been shown to improve the body's use of insulin, increase HDL (good cholesterol), boost thyroid function and acting as an antioxidant and natural antibiotic.

<http://www.alzheimers.net/2013-10-15/superfoods-that-fight-alzheimers/>

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## So, what does Aspartame have to do with it?

Artificial sweeteners of all kinds have been found to wreak havoc with our health. Aspartame, which is perhaps the worst of the bunch, has a long list of studies indicating its harmful effect, ranging from brain damage to pre-term delivery... studies are also starting to confirm lingering suspicions that artificial sweeteners like aspartame may play a role in the development of Alzheimers disease. ( Dr Mercola, June 2014. <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2014/06/26/aspartame-methanol-alzheimers.aspx>)

**Aspartame: The Dangers and Side Effects** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JkS1adbM8Po> July 23, 2010  
Dr Joseph Mercola.

### Study Shows Aspartame Causes Memory Loss

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFm\\_\\_i\\_Ccbw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFm__i_Ccbw) Published Sep 19, 2014 5:05

As more people suffer from some form of dementia...most remain unaware of the cause. There is research proving aspartame's connection to memory loss ...The Tsakiris study from Greece is one of the most definitive studies proving aspartame's connection to memory loss and learning disorder.

# “HOW PEOPLE *Live* MATTERS”

... it really does.

**COROWA COUNSELLING CENTRE**  
23 Riesling St  
COROWA NSW 2646

**HEALTH & WELLBEING CENTRE**  
46 Peter St  
WAGGA WAGGA 2650



Phone: 02 6033 1738  
Mobile: 0408 388 533  
Fax: 02 6033 3507

[info@amaranth.org.au](mailto:info@amaranth.org.au)

We are on the web:  
[www.amaranth.org.au](http://www.amaranth.org.au)



[@AmaranthOz](https://twitter.com/AmaranthOz)



Many conditions have symptoms similar to dementia, so it is important not to assume that someone has dementia just because some of the symptoms are present. Strokes, depression, alcoholism, infections, hormone disorders, nutritional deficiencies and brain tumours can all cause dementia-like symptoms. Many of these conditions can be treated.

Researchers are continually searching for new treatments for Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. The potential treatments are in the early stages of research and are not currently available, but they are all part of the research effort to find more effective treatments for Alzheimer's disease and ultimately a cure.

Some of the research being conducted into potential treatments include;

- Alzheimer's vaccines and immunotherapy
- Gene therapy
- Targeting beta-amyloid production.

For more information, see [Research into dementia treatments and cure](https://nsw.fightdementia.org.au/research-publications/research/areas-of-dementia-research/research-into-dementia-treatments-and-cure).  
(<https://nsw.fightdementia.org.au/research-publications/research/areas-of-dementia-research/research-into-dementia-treatments-and-cure>)

<https://nsw.fightdementia.org.au/about-dementia-and-memory-loss/FAQs>

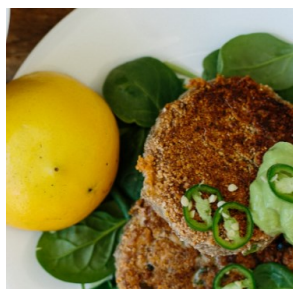
Central to and most distinctive about newer perspectives [of grief] is that when one is grieving, there is no compelling reason 'to let go', or 'move on from' either the deceased or more importantly, aspects of the relationship one shared with that person.

Dr Helen Greally

## Spring Onion & Salmon Patties

Ingredients:

- 400g cooked salmon (fresh or tinned)
- 3 spring onions stems, chopped
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 2 or 3 organic eggs (the amount will depend on the size of the eggs)
- 1 cup sunflower seed (activated sunflower seeds—gives a better texture for the crumbling)
- Coconut oil for cooking
- Seaweed salt to taste
- 3 garlic cloves
- 2 or 3 ripe avocadoes
- Option—fresh herbs
- Lemon to serve
- Chilli for garnish.



Method:

1. Add salmon, 2 eggs, garlic, pepper, salt to taste, fresh herbs and spring onions to a bowl and mix to combine
2. Add more eggs if needed
3. Add the sunflower seeds to a food processor and blend until resembles crunchy flour (leave texture as this would be used to crumb the patties)
4. Heat a fry pan to medium heat
5. Roll or press the salmon mixture into patties and roll/coat in the sunflower seed crumbing mix
6. Add some coconut oil to pan and coat it
7. Fry the patties till golden brown and cooked through
8. Blend avocadoes, a little melted coconut oil, salt, pepper and lemon juice to taste. Blend until creamy and lump free. Serve in a small bowl
9. Serve the patties with lemon, dip, a fresh salad and a sprinkle of chopped chilli.

[www.changinghabits.com.au/recipes](http://www.changinghabits.com.au/recipes)