

10 QUESTIONS

EVERY WOMAN SHOULD ASK HER DOCTOR ABOUT *BRAIN HEALTH*

Every 65 seconds a new brain develops Alzheimer's. **Two out of three of them belong to women and we don't know why.**

We do know that **most women don't talk to their doctors about their brain health**, unaware that their future may depend on it. Following are 10 questions WAM recommends you ask your doctor to get started.

**WOMEN'S
ALZHEIMER'S
MOVEMENT**



10 QUESTIONS

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20's, 30's & 40's

- 1. What lifestyle habits will protect my brain health throughout life?** Ask about diet and exercise, and discuss any vitamins, supplements and hormones - including birth control - you are taking.
- 2. I'm pregnant. What cognitive changes should I expect as a result of pregnancy?** Pregnancy causes hormonal changes including after you've given birth and during/after breast feeding. Take notes about any signs of postpartum depression, and review them with your doctor.

40's & 50's

- 3. I am considering a hysterectomy. Is there an Alzheimer's link?** Early studies show a correlation between a hysterectomy (removal of the uterus) and an oophorectomy (removal of the ovaries) and the risk of Alzheimer's. However, other factors come into play including age and whether you've gone through menopause. Ask about all your options to make an informed decision.
- 4. I have a family history of Alzheimer's. Is there anything I can do to protect myself?** Having Alzheimer's in the family doesn't mean you'll get it, but it's good for your doctor to know as you review your overall health and plan of care.
- 5. I think I am entering perimenopause. What should I expect?** The start of menopause includes hormonal transitions that may impact memory changes. Talk to your doctor if you are depressed, moody, or having a hard time focusing. Ask about hormone therapy (HT) and any associated cognitive impacts.

- 6. Do I need a brain scan, and/or a baseline cognitive test?** Your doctor may want a cognitive baseline if you are experiencing memory loss that concerns you.
- 7. I have heard that hormone therapy (HT) may be linked to an increased risk for Alzheimer's and cancer. What do I do?** Whether your doctor is recommending HT or you're already on HT, ask about any effects on brain health. Scientific studies indicate that HT initiated early in menopausal transition can reduce risk of Alzheimer's, whereas initiation later in life (65 and older) is of no benefit nor harm. The type of progestin used in HT can be harmful. Review your symptoms, risk factors, and preferences and make a decision that is best for you.
- 8. I am going through cancer treatment. How will this affect my brain health?** Some cancer treatments and chemotherapies that suppress estrogen production may affect brain health. Many women experience "brain fog" and "chemo brain" which are not the same as Alzheimer's. However, because estrogen loss may impact your long-term risk, ask for a plan tailored just for you.

60's & BEYOND

- 9. Should I see a neurologist or geriatrician?** If you are experiencing forgetfulness, trouble with language, memory loss or other symptoms that concern you, ask to see a geriatrician or neurologist. It doesn't mean you have Alzheimer's, but a specialist can help.
- 10. I'm worried I may have Alzheimer's. How can I know for sure?** Ask for testing to be sure. Ask if you are eligible to participate in a clinical trial, and if you are, sign up right away. It may help you — and may help scientists find the key to wiping out Alzheimer's disease once and for all.