
DAVID'S ALZHEIMER'S FIGHT

ALZHEIMER'S: FINDING COURAGE & EMPOWERMENT AFTER DIAGNOSIS

INTRODUCTION

Receiving an Alzheimer's diagnosis can be overwhelming, but it's also an opportunity to take control, plan ahead, and live meaningfully. David Uhlfelder shares his journey with early-stage Alzheimer's, aiming to empower individuals and families after diagnosis. This guide summarizes strategies for resilience, hope, and practical action, encouraging open discussion, planning, and community support.

WHY KNOWING MATTERS

- Early Diagnosis: Allows you to take steps to slow progression, make informed decisions, and plan for the future.
- Empowerment: Enables participation in care planning, organizing important documents, and communicating wishes to loved ones.
- Reducing Burden: Early action helps reduce the burden on family and ensures your preferences are respected.
- Emotional Impact: It's normal to feel fear or despair, but knowledge is the first step toward regaining control and finding support.
- Strength & Preparedness: Knowledge brings strength, preparedness, and empowerment.

ALZHEIMER'S IMPACT & COMMUNITY

Alzheimer's affects many families; Florida alone has an estimated 720,000 cases. Community support is vital for those affected.

ABOUT DAVID UHLFELDER

- 74 years old, native Floridian, entrepreneur, podcaster, public speaker, passionate cook, photographer, and comedian.
- Dedicated to helping others through advocacy and education.

GUIDING VALUES & KEY PRINCIPLES FOR LIVING WELL

- Attitude is a Choice: Focus on positivity and adaptability. Change is constant—embrace it with grace.
- Connection: We are all connected. Seek support, share your journey, and help others when you can.
- Honesty & Respect: Be open with yourself and others. Respect and empathy foster understanding and support.
- Perseverance: Challenges are part of the journey. Keep moving forward and celebrate small victories.
- Treat Others Well: Treat others as you wish to be treated; we are all here to help each other.
- Responding to Challenges: The only true power is how we respond to life's challenges.

UNDERSTANDING ALZHEIMER'S

- Alzheimer's can begin 20+ years before symptoms appear; early changes in the brain may go unnoticed for decades.
- Alzheimer's is a physical brain disease, not just a mental illness—characterized by amyloid plaques, tau tangles, brain shrinkage, and neuron loss.
- Differs from psychological conditions like depression or anxiety.

RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS & MEMORY PROBLEMS

- Normal aging may involve:
- Occasionally forgetting names or appointments, misplacing items, or taking longer to learn new things.

Abnormal: Warning Signs:

- Forgetting recent conversations, repeating questions, getting lost in familiar places, or struggling with simple tasks.
- Frequent forgetfulness, losing track after interruptions, short-term memory lapses.
- Forgetting passwords, routines, or conversations.
- Interruptions can increase frustration and confusion.

TAKING ACTION

- Adopt a Healthy Lifestyle: Exercise regularly, eat nutritious foods, challenge your brain, stay socially connected, and protect your sleep.
- Organize Important Matters: Prepare legal documents, designate a healthcare surrogate, and communicate your wishes.
- Seek Support: Reach out to community resources, support groups, and professionals for guidance and assistance.
- Preserve Independence: Stay ahead of symptoms, ease the load on loved ones, be an active voice in care, get legal affairs in order, organize digital and financial life.

MEDICATION & SUPPLEMENTS

- Make informed choices about medications and supplements.
- Consult your doctor about any changes or clinical trials.
- Example: Exelon Patch (FDA approved for symptom management); 138 drugs in 182 clinical trials; no cure yet.

TURNING POINT & HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Inspired by a conversation with Karen Gilbert DNP MS RN CDP (Alzheimer's Community Care). Adopted a healthy lifestyle: diet, exercise, brain games, socializing, stress management. Immediate and ongoing results.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT

Alzheimer's Community Care

- Specialized Alzheimer's Adult Day Centers: Located throughout Palm Beach, Martin, and St. Lucie counties.
- Family Navigators: Trained professionals guide families through every stage of the disease.
- 24-Hour Assistance Line: For non-medical urgent needs, call (800) 394-1771 or (561) 683-2700.
- ID Locator Service: Provides radio frequency bracelets and GPS systems to find someone who has wandered away.
- Support for Those Living Alone: Programs to promote independence and safety.
- Education & Advocacy: Community education, professional training, and advocacy for dementia-friendly policies.
- Website: <https://alzcare.org/>
- Address: 1615 Forum Pl, 5th Floor, West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Statewide and National Resources

- Alzheimer's Disease Initiative (ADI): Offers respite care, case management, caregiver counseling, and support groups.
- Area Agency on Aging Palm Beach/Treasure Coast: Provides adult day care, caregiver training, and home-delivered meals.
- Alzheimer's Association Support Groups: Free support groups and a 24/7 Helpline (800-272-3900).
- Dementia Respite Ministries: Local churches and organizations offer respite programs.

RESEARCH & STUDIES

- Physical activity and lifestyle changes can slow progression and improve outcomes.
- For more information:
- <https://www.massgeneralbrigham.org/en/about/newsroom/press-releases/physical-activity-may-slow-alzheimers-disease>

- <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2024/07/alzheimers-study-finds-diet-lifestyle-changes-yield-improvements/>
- <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2025/11/251104013008.htm>
- <https://alzres.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13195-024-01482-z>
- <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/nutrition/articles/10.3389/fnut.2023.1213223/full>

DIET & LIFESTYLE

Healthy Eating Tips

- Avoid sugar and processed foods—linked to inflammation and disease.
- Monk fruit powder: A healthy sugar alternative.

Healthy Hot Chocolate

- 1 cup Non-Fat Almond Milk
- 1–2 tbsp Monk Fruit Powder
- ½ tbsp Cacao Powder
- Stir while heating up
- 50 cal, 0 sugar, 11 carbs

Mediterranean Diet Core Foods

- Vegetables: Tomatoes, leafy greens, broccoli, carrots, eggplant, zucchini, peppers
- Fruits: Apples, oranges, grapes, berries, melons, figs
- Whole Grains: Brown rice, whole-wheat bread and pasta, oats, barley, quinoa
- Legumes: Beans, lentils, chickpeas, peas
- Nuts and Seeds: Almonds, walnuts, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds
- Healthy Fats: Extra virgin olive oil, olives, avocados
- Lean Proteins: Fish (especially fatty fish like salmon and sardines), seafood, poultry
- Dairy (in moderation): Cheese (feta, goat cheese), yogurt
- Herbs and Spices: Basil, oregano, garlic, parsley, mint, rosemary
- Red wine (in moderation): Traditionally included in the Mediterranean diet
- Red meat: Eaten sparingly

SAMPLE MEDITERRANEAN DIET RECIPES FOR LUNCH AND DINNER

- **Mediterranean Breakfast Bowl**
 - Whole grains (brown rice or quinoa)
 - Sliced tomatoes and cucumbers
 - A handful of leafy greens (spinach or arugula)
 - 1 boiled egg or a scoop of Greek yogurt
 - Drizzle with extra virgin olive oil and sprinkle with fresh herbs (parsley, mint)
- **Simple Chickpea Salad**
 - 1 can chickpeas (drained and rinsed)
 - Chopped tomatoes, cucumbers, and red onion
 - A handful of fresh parsley
 - 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
 - Juice of half a lemon
 - Salt, pepper, and a pinch of oregano
- **Grilled Salmon with Veggies**
 - 1 salmon fillet
 - Sliced zucchini, eggplant, and bell peppers
 - Brush with olive oil, sprinkle with rosemary and garlic
 - Grill until cooked through

- Serve with a side of brown rice or whole-wheat bread
- **Snack Ideas**
 - A handful of almonds or walnuts
 - Sliced apples or berries
 - Greek yogurt with honey and seeds
- These recipes use the core foods highlighted in your handout—vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts, healthy fats, lean proteins, and herbs/spices—making them easy to prepare and supportive of brain health.

DAILY ROUTINES FOR BRAIN HEALTH

Example Daily Routine

- Morning: Light exercise (walk, stretch, yoga); healthy breakfast (whole grains, fruit, nuts); brain game (Sudoku, crossword, memory app)
- Midday: Social interaction (call a friend, join a group); balanced lunch (lean protein, vegetables, healthy fats); short nap or relaxation
- Afternoon: Creative activity (music, art, photography); snack (yogurt, berries, seeds); review medications and routines
- Evening: Family time or podcast participation; light dinner (vegetables, beans, fish); calming routine (reading, gentle stretching); prepare for restful sleep

LIVING WELL WITH ALZHEIMER’S

- Regular exercise, improved memory, and mental clarity.
- Engaging in brain games and advocacy.
- Reconnecting with friends and family.
- Join social groups.

GET INVOLVED – BE A GUEST ON DAVID’S PODCAST

- Participate in podcasts as a patient, family member, doctor, nurse practitioner, trial participant, caregiver, or educator.
- Podcast and resources can be found on the website <https://davidalzheimersfight.org/>

FINAL THOUGHTS

- Every day is a new opportunity: Focus on what you can do, not what you can’t.
- Find joy in daily activities, reconnect with friends, and pursue new interests.
- You’re not alone: Many have walked this path—reach out, share your story, and find strength in the community.
- Early knowledge empowers you to take action.
- “Thank you for sharing this journey. Remember, you are not alone—there is hope, support, and a caring community ready to help.”
- Show this to family and friends to raise awareness of Alzheimer’s symptoms.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This handout is for educational purposes only and is not professional medical advice. For any medical concerns, always consult your physician or a qualified healthcare provider.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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