

David's Alzheimer's Fight

Finding Courage & Empowerment After an Alzheimer's Diagnosis

Introduction

Receiving an Alzheimer's diagnosis can be overwhelming, but it's also an opportunity to take control, plan ahead, and live meaningfully. This handout summarizes one individual's journey and the strategies that helped build resilience and hope.

Why Knowing Matters

- **Understanding the Diagnosis:** Early diagnosis allows you to take steps to slow the progression of symptoms and make informed decisions about your future.
- **Empowerment:** Knowing your diagnosis means you can participate in planning your care, organize important documents, and communicate your wishes to loved ones.
- **Reducing Burden:** Taking action early 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.

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.

Recognizing the Signs

Normal Aging:

- Occasionally forgetting names or appointments, misplacing items, or taking longer to learn new things.

Warning Signs:

- Forgetting recent conversations, repeating questions, getting lost in familiar places, or struggling with simple tasks.

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.

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.
- **ID Locator Service:** Provides radio frequency bracelets and GPS systems to help prevent wandering.
- **Support for Those Living Alone:** Programs to promote independence and safety.
- **Education & Advocacy:** Community education, professional training, and advocacy for dementia-friendly policies.

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.

The Mediterranean Diet

Adopting a Mediterranean diet is one of the most recommended lifestyle changes for brain health and slowing Alzheimer's progression.

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, often enjoyed with meals
- Red meat: Not forbidden but eaten sparingly

Sample Recipes:

- Grilled Salmon with Olive Oil & Herbs – Salmon fillet, olive oil, fresh dill, lemon, salt, pepper. Grill and serve with roasted vegetables.
- Greek Chickpea Salad – Chickpeas, cucumber, tomato, feta, olive oil, oregano. Toss and chill.
- Whole-Wheat Pasta with Spinach & Garlic – Whole-wheat pasta, spinach, garlic, olive oil, parmesan. Sauté and combine.

The DASH Diet

Sample Recipes:

- Berry Yogurt Parfait – Low-fat yogurt, mixed berries, granola. Layer and serve chilled.
- Roasted Chicken with Sweet Potatoes – Chicken breast, sweet potatoes, olive oil, rosemary. Roast and serve with steamed broccoli.
- Oatmeal with Nuts & Fresh Fruit – Oats, walnuts, almonds, banana, berries. Cook oats and top with fruit and nuts.

The MIND Diet

Sample Recipes:

- Spinach & Walnut Salad – Spinach, walnuts, blueberries, vinaigrette. Toss and serve.
- Lentil Soup with Leafy Greens – Lentils, kale, carrots, onion, garlic, vegetable broth. Simmer and serve hot.
- Avocado Toast on Whole Grain Bread – Whole grain bread, avocado, tomato, olive oil. Toast bread, mash avocado, top with tomato and drizzle with oil.

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 community.

Contact Information

David Uhlfelder

Email: David@davidsalzheimersfight.org

Phone: 561-818-2528

Website and Podcast links: <https://davidsalzheimersfight.org>

Alzheimer's Community Care HQ

1615 Forum Pl, 5th Floor, West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Phone: (561) 683-2700

Phone: (800) 394-1771 Assistance Line

After Hours, Weekends, and Holidays

This is for non-medical emergencies.

All medical emergencies need to call 911.

Dr. Karen Gilbert, DNP, MS, RN, CDP

Vice President of Education & Quality Assurance

Email: kgilbert@alzcare.org

Website: <https://alzcare.org>

Digital Handout & Resources

Podcast & Website: <https://davidsalzheimersfight.org>



Handout Download: Scan the QR code below for a digital copy.

