

# Alzheimer's disease differential diagnosis

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When diagnosing [Alzheimer's disease](#), healthcare professionals consider various factors and perform a differential diagnosis to rule out other conditions that may present similar symptoms. Here are some conditions that may be considered during the process:

**Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI):** MCI refers to a noticeable decline in cognitive abilities that is greater than expected for age but does not meet the criteria for dementia. Individuals with MCI have an increased risk of developing Alzheimer's disease, but not all cases progress to dementia.

**Vascular dementia:** Vascular dementia results from reduced blood flow to the brain, often due to stroke or other vascular conditions. It can cause similar symptoms to Alzheimer's, but the decline in cognitive abilities is more abrupt and may have a stepwise pattern.

**Lewy body dementia (LBD):** LBD is characterized by the presence of abnormal protein deposits called Lewy bodies in the brain. It shares some symptoms with Alzheimer's, such as memory loss and confusion, but LBD may also involve visual hallucinations, motor symptoms, and fluctuations in alertness.

**Frontotemporal dementia (FTD):** FTD is a group of disorders characterized by the degeneration of nerve cells in the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain. It can lead to changes in behavior, personality, and language, which may differ from the primarily memory-related symptoms seen in Alzheimer's.

**Parkinson's disease:** Although primarily known for its motor symptoms, Parkinson's disease can also cause cognitive impairment, including memory problems and executive dysfunction. Distinguishing between Parkinson's disease with dementia (PDD) and Alzheimer's can be challenging due to overlapping features.

**Depression:** Severe depression can cause cognitive symptoms, such as memory loss and difficulty concentrating, which may resemble early-stage Alzheimer's disease. However, in depression, these symptoms often improve with treatment.

**Thyroid disorders:** [Hypothyroidism](#) (underactive thyroid) can lead to cognitive impairment and memory problems that mimic Alzheimer's disease. A blood test can help determine if thyroid function is contributing to the symptoms.

**Vitamin deficiencies:** Deficiencies in vitamins such as vitamin B12 and folate can result in cognitive decline and memory problems. Blood tests can identify these deficiencies and guide appropriate treatment.

**Medication side effects:** Certain medications can cause cognitive impairment and memory problems as side effects. Reviewing the individual's medication list and considering alternative medications can help in such cases.

It's important to note that this list is not exhaustive, and other conditions may also be considered during the differential diagnosis process. A thorough evaluation by a healthcare professional is necessary to arrive at an accurate diagnosis.

## Normal pressure hydrocephalus

[Alzheimer's disease differential diagnosis with Normal pressure hydrocephalus.](#)

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Last update: **2025/06/06 04:10**

