

Transcript Details

This is a transcript of an educational program accessible on the ReachMD network. Details about the program and additional media formats for the program are accessible by visiting: <https://reachmd.com/programs/alzheimers-disease-towards-earlier-detection/alzheimers-hidden-disease-more-ways-one/8327/>

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Alzheimer's: A Hidden Disease in More Ways Than One

Opening Announcer:

You're listening to ReachMD. Uncover the truth about Alzheimer's in this special series, Alzheimer's Disease: Towards Earlier Detection.

Dr. Matt Birnholz:

Welcome to the ReachMD series Alzheimer's Disease: Towards Earlier Detection. I'm Dr. Matt Birnholz. On this episode, we join Dr. Carol Lippa, Professor of Neurology & Director of the Memory Disorders Program at Drexel University College of Medicine. Dr. Lippa talks about the surprisingly hidden nature of Alzheimer's disease.

Dr. Carol Lippa:

People speak of Alzheimer's as being a hidden disease, and one of the reasons for that is because the amyloid plaques or pathology occurs insidiously in the brain, perhaps a decade before the person gets any symptoms. So biologically you have the disease way before you start to become really forgetful. But there are other ways in which Alzheimer's is also hidden, and that's sort of socially in that people are just starting to realize that there *are* things you can do, that you want to see a doctor if you have memory loss or you think you might have Alzheimer's. There are reversible causes of memory loss that can be treated. And there are symptomatic treatments where you can kind of keep things stable for a year or so, or maybe improve things a little bit for a while. So one of the ways it's hidden is that people aren't yet really coming out to get treatment when they could actually do a little better over time or they could get a mimicking condition treated. And the other is just sort of this stigma of the disease. Patients will stay home because they're embarrassed to go out. They don't want to see friends because they're embarrassed that people will know or that they won't be able to remember the conversation or follow things. And we have a lot of evidence that, actually, people with memory loss and Alzheimer's do better down the road when they stay socially engaged and active. So it's kind of a paradox that the stigma of the disease keeps them hidden when they could be more proactive, if it weren't hidden.

Dr. Matt Birnholz:

That was Dr. Carol Lippa from Drexel University College of Medicine. For access to continuing episodes of Alzheimer's Disease: Towards Earlier Detection, visit our series page at ReachMD.com. Thanks for joining us.

Closing Announcer:

You've listening to ReachMD. Uncover the truth about Alzheimer's in this special series, Alzheimer's Disease: Towards Earlier Detection. To revisit any part of this discussion and to access other episodes visit [ReachMD.com/timehidesalzheimers](https://reachmd.com/timehidesalzheimers). Thank you for listening.