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The [Connecticut Care Planning Council](#) (CTCPC) lists companies and individual providers on our website who help families deal with the crisis and burden of long term care.

One purpose of the CTCPC is to educate the public on the need for care planning *before* a crisis occurs. A second purpose is to provide, in one place, all of the available government and private services for eldercare.

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### Event Calendar:

#### VA Aid & Attendance Seminars

**March 20, 2012**

White Oaks

230 Deming St Manchester

2:00-3:30 PM

the public will recognize and turn to for expert help in dealing with the challenges of long term care.

**Call us at 860-769-6938**

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## Know Your Dementias - A Dementia Primer

By: Denise F. Talbot, MA

It's estimated that over five million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease, but did you know that Alzheimer's is only one type of dementia? There are approximately 50-70 types of dementias (depending on the source) with Alzheimer's being the most prevalent, accounting for 60 to 70% of cases. The Alzheimer's Association is a source of help and information for individuals and families struggling with any of these dementias.

**What is Dementia?** – Dementia is a general term used to describe the symptoms of a larger group of illnesses which affect your cognitive function, speech, reasoning and physical abilities. Most dementias are incurable; however a few are preventable and some are “reversible” (symptoms that

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to find out more

I have a loved one with Alzheimer's, and I need caregiving help. How do I make sure my loved one is well taken care of, and that they don't lose their home or life savings? Discover the secrets at

[www.ConnecticutMemoryLawyer.com](http://www.ConnecticutMemoryLawyer.com)

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mimic dementia but are in fact caused by other conditions).

**Alzheimer's disease** – Alzheimer's disease is a progressive brain disorder that gradually destroys a person's memory and ability to learn, reason, make judgments, communicate and carry out daily activities.

**Vascular Dementia** – The second most common type of dementia is vascular dementia. There are generally two forms of this dementia. One form develops as a result of a serious stroke which blocks a major blood vessel, interrupting the blood supply to a large portion of the brain. This is often referred to as "post-stroke dementia." The other form, developed over time, occurs when there is cumulative damage from a series of very small strokes. The decline happens in a stair-step progression with declines and plateaus rather than the slow, steady decline of Alzheimer's disease.

**Multiple Causes or "Mixed" Dementia** – It is very common for an individual to have both Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia. Autopsies have revealed evidence that up to 45 percent of individuals with dementia had Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia. As you might suspect, having mixed dementia, particularly in the earlier stages of the condition, has a greater affect on an individual's cognitive functioning than one or the other dementia alone.

**Lewy Body Dementia** – This dementia, named after the scientist who first described the abnormal deposits of the protein alpha-synuclein inside the



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brain's nerve cells, is characterized by symptoms similar to Alzheimer's disease, but with these differences.

- Excessive daytime drowsiness.
- Visual hallucinations.
- Daily or day-to-day fluctuating cognitive symptoms and levels of alertness.
- Stiffness in gait, lack of facial expression, problems with balance and falls.
- May be associated, in about 50% of cases, with rapid eye movement sleep disorder.

**Parkinson's Disease** – Lewy bodies are found in the brain of a Parkinson's patients. Individuals often develop dementia in the later stages of the disease.

**Huntington's Disease** – This disease is inherited through a parent. Individuals who have a parent with the disease have a 50 percent chance of inheriting the gene. Those who inherit the gene will go on to develop Huntington's disease. Huntington's disease destroys nerve cells in certain regions of the brain.

**Frontotemporal Dementia** – This dementia affects the frontal lobes and the temporal, or side lobes of the brain. A type called Pick's disease is sometimes characterized by abnormal microscopic deposits called Pick bodies. Symptoms of Frontotemporal Dementia include:

- A more rapid onset than Alzheimer's disease
- Obvious personality changes
- An increase in appetite which

causes weight gain

**Wernicke-Korsakoff Syndrome** – This is a brain disorder that occurs in two stages. The acute stage of the disease is caused by a deficiency in thiamine or vitamin B-1. This is referred to as “Wernicke encephalopathy.” Korsakoff psychosis is the chronic stage of the disorder and is most commonly caused by alcoholism, but can be associated with AIDS, the spread of cancer throughout the body or other conditions. Symptoms of Wernicke-Korsakoff Syndrome may include:

- “Confabulation,” or making up information that the individual believes to be true.
- Problems learning new information, confusion and permanent memory gaps.

**AIDS related dementia** – This dementia usually develops in the later stages of the disease in about seven percent of people who are not taking anti-HIV drugs.

**Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease** – Pronounced *CROYZ-felt YAH-cob*. This is an extremely rare but rapidly fatal brain disorder. It is caused when a protein called “prion” which normally exists in the brain folds into an abnormal three-dimensional shape. “Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD)” is a human disorder caused by eating meat from cattle infected with “mad cow disease.”

**“Reversible” dementias** – These are conditions associated with dementia-like symptoms. In some cases, they can even cause dementia. With appropriate

treatment, the individual can return to “normal” or their baseline condition.

Some causes are:

- Overmedication or side effects of medication
- Metabolic problems such as thyroid problems or hypoglycemia
- Vitamin B-12 deficiency
- Urinary tract infections
- Subdural hematoma (bleeding between the surface of the brain and the outer covering, perhaps caused by a head injury)
- Brain tumor
- Cardiovascular condition
- Depression
- Delirium – This is a sudden onset of confusion, disorientation and rapidly altering mental states. It is usually caused by a physical or psychiatric illness which is treatable. *If these symptoms occur suddenly, it is crucial that the individual receive treatment immediately.*

Here are ten warning signs of Alzheimer’s disease developed by the Alzheimer’s Association.

1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life
2. Challenges in planning or solving problems
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work or at leisure
4. Confusion with time or place
5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships
6. New problems with words in speaking or writing
7. Misplacing things and losing the

- ability to retrace steps
- 8. Decreased or poor judgment
- 9. Withdrawal from work or social activities
- 10. Changes in mood and personality

If you have a number of the warning signs it is important to consult with your physician as soon as possible. Early diagnosis is important because it allows for immediate treatment which may lessen the symptoms for a period of time or reverse the condition, depending on the type of dementia diagnosed. It provides the diagnosed individual with an opportunity to plan and to make long-term care, financial and legal decisions before the disease progresses. To access the Alzheimer's Association's 24/7helpline, please call 800.272.3900 for more information.

For more information on Alzheimer's and the steps you should take right now to protect yourself, your loved one, and your family please visit [www.ConnecticutMemoryLawyer.com](http://www.ConnecticutMemoryLawyer.com) and download a free Alzheimer's Resource Kit.

## **Vitamins and Mineral Supplements Are Important for Older People**

Research has discovered that as we age, our diets and our need for dietary supplements become more. Doctors

are increasingly concerned about boosting the levels of vitamins and minerals that we need as we grow older.

As most people get older, they tend to eat less due to a loss of appetite. As a result, many elderly individuals do not take in adequate amounts of vitamins and other nutrients as they did when they were younger. Other factors that can affect appetite and the inadequate uptake of vital nutrients are medications, medical complications, certain disabilities, diabetes, changes in the digestive system and even the changes in our skin as we age. One study estimates that one-third of the elderly are alarmingly low on important vitamins and minerals. Another study indicates that two thirds of the elderly patients admitted to a hospital are mal-nourished, resulting in low levels of vital nutrients. When a person is vitamin and mineral deficient, he or she is more susceptible to illness and infections. It is estimated that deaths due to infections are ten times more likely in the elderly.

### **Vitamins**

So what is a vitamin and why is it so essential to our bodies? A vitamin is a molecule that our bodies need to carry out certain biological functions. With only a few exceptions, we have no way to create vitamin molecules ourselves, so these vital building blocks must come in through food that we eat. The human body is known to need at least 13 different vitamins. We are able to store some of these for long periods of time in fat cells or in the liver -- such as vitamin A -- but most vitamins need to be replenished frequently.



Vitamins don't supply us with energy. We need protein, carbohydrates, and fats for that. What vitamins do is to help the carbohydrates, fats, and proteins release energy. These vital compounds are very important and they are required for all sorts of complex chemical reactions in our bodies.

Vitamins are also needed to assist the enzymes that repair tissue and help with the production of cells. Many studies show that vitamins and minerals can help or prevent some of the disorders or diseases related to aging.

There are two types of vitamins -- water soluble and fat soluble. Water soluble vitamins are not stored in our systems. They pass through us quickly. In order to keep these nutrients in our bodies we have to consume them frequently.

Water soluble vitamins contribute to our health, energy and stamina. This type of vitamin also helps in the function of over one hundred enzymes and chemical reactions that give our bodies energy. Listed below are some of the well known water soluble vitamins and their benefits.

- Vitamin B5 – good for reducing swelling
- Vitamin B3 – reduces tissue swelling and helps increase blood flow.
- Vitamin B6 – also reduces swelling. When combined with vitamin B12 in proper concentration has shown to reduce heart disease.
- Vitamin B12 – This is the most vital of the B's. It aids in the formation of cells, myelin production, healthy nerves, and maintaining immune system and

mental function.

- Vitamin C – Vitamin C helps in the formation of cartilage and bone. Some studies have shown it may reduce the progression of osteoarthritis.

Fat soluble vitamins are vitamins that stay in the body and are typically stored in the liver. You can usually receive enough of these compounds by eating a well balanced diet. Any condition that can interfere with the absorption of fat in the body like tuberculosis, cystic fibrosis, hypothyroidism, lactose intolerance, and many other diseases or disorders can cause deficiencies in these vitamins. Before taking the daily recommended dose of fat soluble vitamins you must consult your doctor. Overdosage of these substances can cause a toxic build-up. Listed below are the major fat soluble vitamins.

- Vitamin A – Lungs, throat and mouth depend on vitamin A to retain moisture. This compound is also important for your skin, bones, teeth, digestive system, urinary tract, eyes and aids in preventing skin disorders like acne, boils, and bumpy skin. Some studies show that it may aid in slowing the aging process.
- Vitamin K – plays an important role in the clotting of blood. Research has linked vitamin K to bone health.
- Vitamin D – is produced in the skin by exposure to the sun. Deficiencies mostly occur in people living in northern latitudes where daylight is brief during winter months. Changes in skin as we age can also cause poor

production of vitamin D. Studies show that osteoporosis might progress faster in women with low levels of vitamin D. This compound is essential in helping the body absorb calcium and in maintaining strong bones.

### **Minerals**

Unlike vitamins, minerals are not manufactured by plants or animals. Minerals form in the earth, and are absorbed by plants and found in animals that eat the plants. Listed below are some of the essential minerals needed to maintain a healthy body.

- Iron – helps carry oxygen throughout the body. Iron also helps the immune system ward off foreign entities.
- Calcium – Most women as they get older need calcium supplements to prevent bone loss that causes osteoporosis. Calcium supplements will not do you any good if you do not have the right levels of vitamin D. your body cannot absorb calcium without vitamin D.
- Zinc – Zinc deficiencies can affect skin, nerves, and the body's immune system.

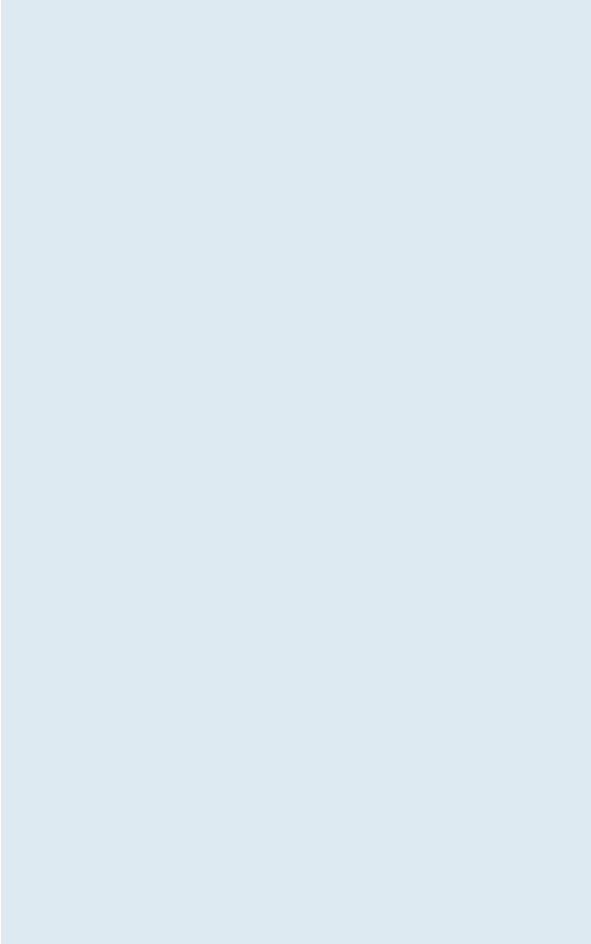
It is important that you take vitamin and mineral supplements with food. Fat soluble vitamins require fat ingestion to result in the best absorption. It is best to take your supplements at the biggest meal of the day.

We use vitamins every day to support the processes our bodies use to maintain life. Ongoing reduced levels of

vitamins can make you weak and more vulnerable to disease. Proper nutrition with vitamins and minerals is vital for seniors to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Other health issues related to aging are discussed on the National Care Planning Council website at [www.longtermcarelink.net](http://www.longtermcarelink.net).

**If you answer "yes" to any of these questions, Weatherby & Associates, PC can help**

- Has the elder been diagnosed with a mentally or physically debilitating disorder such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, ALS, stroke or a decline in functional capacity?
- Is the elder isolated due to the recent death of a spouse, or have family that either lives too far away or is too busy to provide adequate care?
- Is the elder to be discharged into a care facility or currently receiving in-home care?
- Does the elder have a variety of healthcare providers and need coordination and advocacy for quality care?

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- Does the elder have a variety of healthcare providers and need coordination and advocacy for quality care?
  - Does the elder have a spouse whose financial needs must be considered in light of the elder's medical condition?

### **Wisdom from the Web**

**"You are as young as your faith,  
as old as your doubt; as young  
as your self-confidence, as old  
as your fear; as young as your  
hope, as old as your despair."  
~Douglas MacArthur**