

# You have just received a diagnosis of dementia.

## Now what?



### 1 Ask questions about the disease and make sure you understand the answers.

New questions will come up over the weeks and months to come, and your health care provider and team are here to walk this journey with you and your family.

### 2 Learn as much as you can.

There are many resources available through local and national organizations, including educational programs and support groups, as well as online resources. Knowledge is power.

### 3 Understand this is a marathon, not a sprint.

There will be many good years ahead, and now is the time to plan for what you want your life to look like now, while the individual with memory decline is able to enjoy life with family and friends.

### 4 Get your docs in order!

There are a number of documents that should be written or updated. Establish with whom clinicians can discuss patient care with an updated HIPAA form, and who can make medical decisions when the individual with cognitive decline cannot (Advance Directive form). Discuss legal and financial issues with family and get help from professionals to plan now for future.

### 5 Live a brain-healthy life.

Evidence has shown that the best options for enhancing quality of life is a healthy diet, physical activity, social connections, brain stimulation, and not smoking. And get plenty of rest. This applies to individuals with dementia and their care partners.

#### FIRST STEP

#### Resources:

- **Information and Community Resources**

**Alzheimer's Association**

(800) 272-3900 [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)

**Alzheimer's San Diego**

(858) 492-4400 [www.alzsd.org](http://www.alzsd.org)

**Southern Caregiver Resource Center**

(800) 827-1008 [caregivercenter.org](http://caregivercenter.org)

- **Medical Advance Care Planning**

**PREPARE** [prepareforyourcare.org](http://prepareforyourcare.org)

- **Legal and Financial Advance Care Planning**

**Elder Law and Advocacy**

(858) 565-1392 [www.seniorlaw-sd.org](http://www.seniorlaw-sd.org)

- **Understanding your Health Insurance**

**Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program**

(858) 565-1392 [cahealthadvocates.org](http://cahealthadvocates.org)