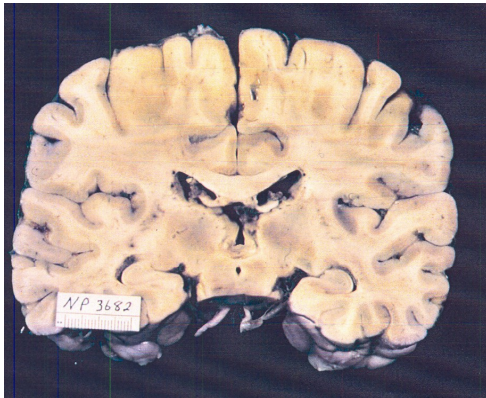




## What Happens to the brain as Alzheimer's progresses?



[http://alzheimers.about.com/library/graphics/brain\\_normal.jpg](http://alzheimers.about.com/library/graphics/brain_normal.jpg)

[http://alzheimers.about.com/library/graphics/brain\\_alz.jpg](http://alzheimers.about.com/library/graphics/brain_alz.jpg)

On the left is a section of normal brain tissue, and one from a brain with Alzheimer's dementia on the right.

Alzheimer's disease leads to nerve cell death and tissue loss throughout the brain. Over time, the brain shrinks dramatically, affecting nearly all its functions.

In the Alzheimer brain:

- ☞ The **cortex shrivels up**, damaging areas involved in thinking, planning and remembering.
- ☞ Shrinkage is especially severe in the **hippocampus**, an area of the cortex that plays a key role in formation of new memories.
- ☞ **Ventricles** (fluid-filled spaces within the brain) grow larger.

These changes in the brain also affect speaking and understanding speech, as well as having a sense of where your body is in relation to objects around you.

As Alzheimer's progresses, individuals may experience changes in personality and behavior and have trouble recognizing friends and family members.