

# Amazing Place *Family* Album

Roy and Dot M.  
do spring planting



Manicures and Faux Wine Tasting!



Poet Rashanda Johnson,  
Kaneisha's aunt, presents  
to participants



Outdoor  
Tai Chi Class



Pilot iPad Group

**AMAZING PLACE**  
A day center for adults  
with mild to moderate dementia

# Family Spirit

Monthly News and Program Calendar MAY 2016

## Understanding Current Medications for Treating Alzheimer's Disease

by JUNE SCHLEICHER, RN, *Amazing Place Program Nurse*

Unfortunately, there is currently no cure for Alzheimer's disease (AD) and no treatment to stop its progression. However, there are several medications frequently prescribed to reduce symptoms such as memory loss, confusion and behavioral changes. These drugs cannot stop the damage occurring within the brain, but can stabilize certain chemicals, enabling brain cells to continue making neurological connections for a longer period of time.

Medications are categorized as those for mild to moderate and moderate to severe symptoms. Simply put, they work as 1) acetylcholinesterase inhibitors or 2) N-methyl-D-aspartate (NMDA) inhibitors (glutamine inhibitors). This article is a recap of FDA-approved medications which help alleviate some AD symptoms (<http://1.usa.gov/IoNWNuh>).

### Mild to moderate

These medications are all acetylcholinesterase inhibitors. They help prevent the breakdown of acetylcholine, a brain chemical important for memory/cognition. As AD progresses, the brain produces less and less acetylcholine causing cholinesterase inhibitors to eventually lose their effect (<http://1.usa.gov/IRZ7w6O>). Medications include:

- Razadyne® (galantamine)
- Exelon® (rivastigmine) oral and patch
- Aricept® (donepezil)

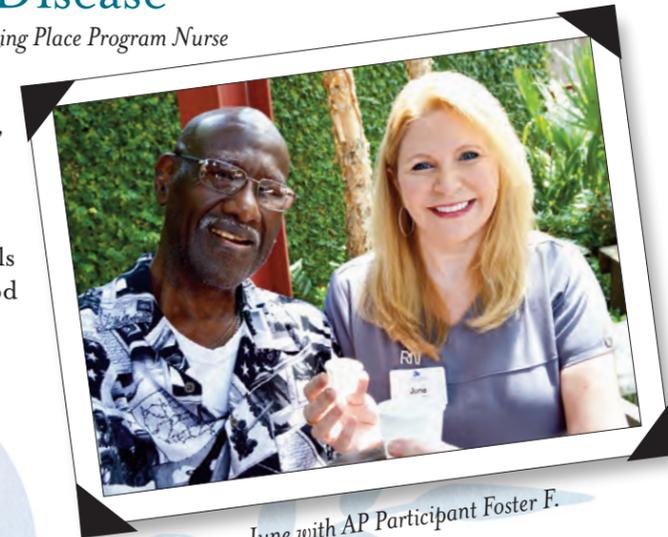
### Moderate to Severe

Namenda® (memantine): NMDA antagonists regulate glutamate, another important brain chemical. When produced in large amounts, glutamate can lead to brain cell death.

- Namzaric®: a combination of Namenda XR® (memantine XR) and Aricept® (donepezil). Two complementary medications (see above) combined; each affecting different brain chemicals, often with better results (<http://wb.md/1WlyhaO>).

Is there a cure in sight? All medications/treatments begin as trial studies. Currently, there are numerous studies including 1) Solanezumab, an anti-amyloid drug which may slow memory/cognitive decline in those not yet presenting symptoms; 2) AZD0530, an experimental drug being tested for those with mild symptoms; 3) SNIFF, a study to determine if inhaled insulin improves memory in those with mild symptoms; 4) GeneMatch, a study based on genetic background; and 5) Tau PET Imaging, a new radioactive compound used with PET scans to identify tau tangles within the brain (<http://1.usa.gov/1VgSoHA>). We are all praying for a cure; sooner rather than later!

At this point, the goal of AD medications is to enable those afflicted to maintain independence, dignity and quality-of-life longer. If you have any questions about medications, don't hesitate to talk to Sally or me.



June with AP Participant Foster F.