

SAGE Test for Alzheimer's: 12 Questions



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Updated on: October 28, 2025

The SAGE test for Alzheimer's Disease is a brief, self-administered cognitive assessment tool to detect early signs of Alzheimer's disease and other cognitive impairments. SAGE stands for "Self-Administered Gerocognitive Exam" and can be an excellent tool for early-stage detection.



The SAGE Test evaluates memory, reasoning, language, and problem-solving skills through a series of questions and tasks. While it is not a diagnostic tool, it helps identify individuals who may need further evaluation by healthcare professionals. Below, we'll examine the SAGE test in detail.

Simple Home Test Detects Early Signs of Dementia and Cognitive Decline

If you suspect that a family member or friend is having a problem with memory loss, thinking clearly, or judgment, you may want them to take the **SAGE test** for dementia.

This at-home pen-and-paper test is free, takes just 15 minutes, and accurately identifies early symptoms of **Alzheimer's disease** or **dementia**. And if the stress and exhaustion of caregiving make you feel like your brain isn't working anymore, this quick test can reassure you that there's no problem with your cognitive function.

We explain how the test works, how to take it at home, and why discussing the results with a doctor is extremely important. We also share 12 dementia care tips that caregivers wish they'd known sooner.

How Does the SAGE Test For Dementia Work?

SAGE stands for Self-Administered Gerocognitive Examination and was developed by researchers at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center.

The SAGE test comprises 12 questions that cover all cognitive aspects, including memory, problem-solving, and language.

There are four different versions of the test. They're similar enough, but having multiple versions means that someone could take the test once a year and not improve their score each year just from taking it before. This way, the test is slightly different each time.

Signs It's Time for a Cognitive Screening


The infographic below highlights several signs that it may be

Signs It's Time to Take a Memory Screening

Are you concerned about the early signs of Alzheimer's and Dementia?

If you loved one exhibits the following, it may be appropriate to take a memory test.

- Repeating the same stories or questions often
- Difficulty managing finances or paying bills on time
- Trouble finding the right words
- Getting lost in familiar places
- Increased confusion, especially in the evening
- Problems following simple instructions or recipes
- Changes in mood, personality, or social withdrawal
- Misplacing items and accusing others of stealing
- Difficulty with planning or making decisions
- Concern from family, friends, or coworkers

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time for a loved one to undergo a cognitive screening.

Detect Early Cognitive Decline: Take the SAGE Test At Home

Anyone can take the SAGE test. It's free, and you can get it on the Ohio State University website. → [Download the official SAGE test](#)

Click the "Download the Test" button, agree to the terms, and choose one of the 4 test versions in your older adult's primary language to download (or save all four versions to your computer for future use). Print the test and take it with a pen or pencil. There is no time limit, but most people finish in approximately 15 minutes.

Sample questions from the quiz:

- How many nickels are in 60 cents?
- You are buying \$13.45 of groceries. How much change would you receive back from a \$20 bill?
- Write down the names of 12 different animals or pets.
- The clock drawing test- Draw a large face of a clock and write in the numbers. Position the hands for 10 minutes after 11 o'clock. On your clock, label "L" for the long hand and "S" for the short hand.



Discuss Test Results With Your Primary Care Physician

Don't assume that the test results are equal to any formal diagnosis of dementia.

The SAGE test is a screening tool that helps doctors detect early signs of cognitive impairment that are typically not noticeable during a regular office visit.

When the test is repeated over time, doctors can monitor changes in cognitive ability. This helps them detect and treat health conditions early.

That's why bringing the completed test to your physician for review is essential. If there are signs of cognitive impairment, they may recommend further testing.

What Happens After Taking the SAGE Test?

Once the SAGE test is complete, sharing the results with a healthcare provider is essential. While this cognitive screening tool can highlight potential concerns, only a doctor can interpret the results and determine the next steps.

Start with your primary care doctor. They may recommend further evaluation or refer you to a specialist, such as a neurologist, geriatrician, or neuropsychologist, who has experience in detecting early stages of Alzheimer's.

Follow-up evaluations may include:

- A more detailed cognitive screening, like the MoCA (Montreal Cognitive Assessment)
- Lab and blood tests to check for treatable causes of memory problems, such as a vitamin deficiency or thyroid issues
- Neuroimaging (such as an MRI or CT scan) to look for structural brain changes or other medical conditions

Getting an early diagnosis—whether it confirms Alzheimer’s, another type of dementia, or a different health issue—can help with treatment planning, support services, and starting medications or lifestyle changes that may help slow progression or improve quality of life.

5 Things to Do If Your Loved One Fails the SAGE Test

- Schedule a doctor’s appointment.
 - Please bring the completed test and request a medical evaluation, starting with their primary care provider.
- Request a referral to a specialist.
 - A neurologist, geriatrician, or memory clinic can complete a cognitive assessment and recommend next steps.
- Ask about further testing.
 - This may include blood work, the MoCA test, and neuroimaging (MRI or CT scan) to look for underlying conditions.
- Begin organizing legal and care planning documents.
 - Start early by establishing a power of attorney, a living will, and a financial plan while your loved one is still able to participate.
- Look into caregiver support and resources.
 - Contact the Alzheimer’s Association or your local Area Agency on Aging for guidance, community-based services, and/or help.