

Mayo Clinic Minute

Why early detection of Alzheimer's disease matters

Video	Audio
Vivien Williams	Alzheimer's disease research has not produced a cure. So why bother with early detection if you can't do anything about it?
Ronald Petersen, M.D., Ph.D. Director Mayo Clinic Alzheimer's Disease Research Center	"We're learning more and more about the underlying features of the disease."
Vivien Williams	And that, says Dr. Ronald Petersen, is why early detection is important. You see, researchers now know that people who develop Alzheimer's disease have certain clues, such as proteins in their brains, that may be a factor in memory loss later on.
Ronald Petersen, M.D., Ph.D.	"With our new biomarker techniques, our imaging techniques, our spinal fluid techniques, we can detect the presence of these proteins in living people. That gives us a tremendous advantage to intervene early – even when somebody is cognitively normal. If we can intervene, we may prevent the development of the symptoms down the road."
Vivien Williams	The next step is to develop clinical trials.
Ronald Petersen, M.D., Ph.D.	"Treatment trials that may be more effective, because we're intervening at the appropriate stage in the disease process."
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Vivien Williams