

Alzheimer's Disease - Other Treatment

Treatment with the herbal supplement ginkgo biloba to improve mental functioning is considered experimental.

Other therapies, such as light therapy, aromatherapy, and exercise, may help reduce behaviors such as agitation but should only be done with supervision.

Other Treatment Choices

- **Ginkgo biloba.** Some evidence suggests that ginkgo biloba may improve thinking problems associated with [Alzheimer's disease](#).¹⁵
- **Aromatherapy.** One small study indicates that this therapy, when used as a lotion containing essential balm oil, may be safe and effective for reducing significant agitation in people with severe [dementia](#).¹⁶ But more research is needed to prove its effectiveness.
- **Light therapy.** This treatment is often used to relieve [depression](#). It may help reduce depression, agitation, and sleeplessness associated with [Alzheimer's](#) disease. The person is exposed to either natural light or artificial light for several hours every morning or at night to reduce depression.
- **Exercise.** Gentle [exercise](#), such as walking or [swimming](#), can also relieve [symptoms of depression](#) associated with Alzheimer's disease. Exercise is most effective when it is combined with teaching caregivers how to work through behavioral problems with the person who has Alzheimer's disease.

Another way a caregiver can try to reduce agitation is to play soothing music for the person who has Alzheimer's disease, during meals and when the caregiver is helping with bathing.

What To Think About

As with other new [drugs](#) in development, other [treatments for Alzheimer's](#) disease such as ginkgo biloba need further study. Their effectiveness and possible side effects are not yet fully known. Talk to your doctor before you decide to try any [herbal therapies](#), [supplements](#), or nonprescription treatments.



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