

## **How to Qualify for Social Security Disability Benefits with Alzheimer's**

Most of the time people who are diagnosed with Alzheimer's are already retired because Alzheimer's usually isn't diagnosed until someone is in their 60s or older. However, early onset Alzheimer's can affect people as young as 40. If you have worked in the past but can't work any longer because you have early onset Alzheimer's you can file a claim for Social Security disability benefits to help make ends meet when you can't work. The only requirements that you must meet in order to file a claim for disability benefits are that you have worked at some point in the past and that you expect you won't be able to work for at least a year because of your medical condition.

### **Medically Qualifying for Disability Benefits**

Every condition that qualifies for disability benefits is listed in the Social Security Administration's [Blue Book](#) along with the requirements that must be met to qualify for benefits because of that condition. There is a listing in the Blue Book for early onset Alzheimer's that says that in order to be eligible for disability benefits you must be able to prove that you have significant decline in at least one of these areas:

- learning and remembering (short-term memory in particular)
- using language (inability to recall words, misuse of words)
- paying attention to tasks or listening to others
- planning and judgment
- social cognition (ability to know proper social behavior in differing circumstances), or
- physical coordination.

You must also be able to prove that you have an extreme limitation in one of these areas, or a severe limitation in two of them:

- understanding, remembering, or using information (ability to understand instructions, learn new things, apply new knowledge to tasks)
- concentrating on tasks and completing tasks at a reasonable speed
- adapting or managing oneself (making plans for oneself independently of others; being aware of normal hazards and taking appropriate precautions, having practical personal skills), and
- interacting with others (with socially acceptable behavior).

To prove that you meet these requirements you will have to submit medical documentation like a doctor's diagnosis, PET scan results, MRI results, and other medical records. You can also submit statements from caseworkers or social workers, your former employer, and even friends

and family members who can speak about the limitations that you have because of your condition.

### **Medical Vocational Allowance**

It's very common that someone will have a medical condition that prevents them from working but they don't meet the very strict requirements listed in the Blue Book. If that happens to you then you can file for a [Medical Vocational Allowance](#). To get this exception you will need to [download](#) a Residual Functional Capacity form from the SSA website and have your doctor fill it out. Your doctor can describe your limitations in detail in the RFC. The SSA will look at the RFC evaluation, your age, your work history, and your skills to see if there is some type of work that you can do. If they can't find any work that you can do then you will be eligible for disability benefits.

### **File A Claim**

Often the process of getting approval can take several months so don't wait to [start your claim](#) for disability benefits. You can file a claim online whenever you're ready. You can also make an appointment at your local SSA office. Bring copies of all of your medical records and they will help you file a claim.

### **Resources:**

Blue Book Description: <https://www.disabilitybenefitscenter.org/blue-book>

Medical Vocational Allowance: <https://www.disabilitybenefitscenter.org/glossary/medical-vocational-allowance>

Residual Capacity Form: <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms/images/SSA4/G-SSA-4734-U8-1.pdf>

Start Your Claim: <https://www.ssa.gov/applyfordisability/>