

# Cheap and simple blood test can diagnose Alzheimer's EIGHT YEARS before symptoms start

The “novel approach” distinguishes between toxic and healthy forms of a protein that clumps in dementia patients



The new blood test can help diagnose Alzheimer's years before symptoms start (Image: PA)

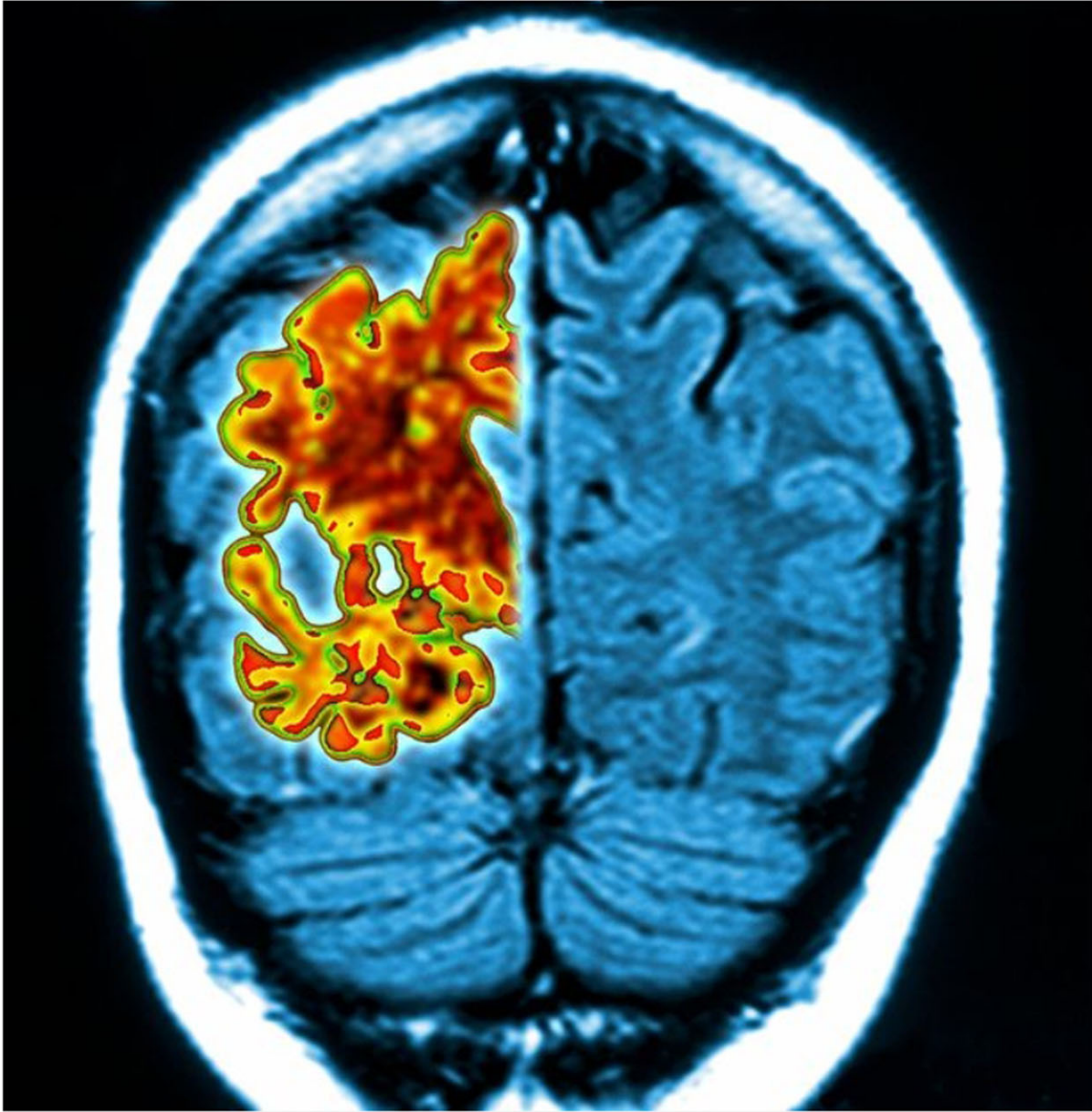
A simple and cheap blood test could detect signs of [Alzheimer's disease](#) years before symptoms start.

The new process has been able to pick up signs of the killer condition an average of eight years prior to signs developing, experts claim.

The “novel approach” distinguishes between toxic and healthy forms of a protein that clumps in dementia patients.

Toxic amyloid beta molecules — one of the hallmarks of the disease — begin accumulating in the patient's body 15 to 20 years before the onset of dementia.

Currently, the only way to identify these is through costly PET scans or invasive spinal tap procedures.



**A study involving 874 people found it diagnosed Alzheimer's with 86% accuracy** (Image: Science Photo Library RM)

And a study involving 874 people found it diagnosed Alzheimer's with 86% accuracy. Scientists believe the procedure could be used to detect Parkinson's disease.

But a team from Ruhr University Bochum in Germany has developed a treatment involving infrared sensors in a pre-screening instrument.

Ruhr's Prof Klaus Gerwert said: "This shows a novel approach to detect early states of misfolding diseases, which could be extended to other diseases."

The test, revealed in EMBO Molecular Medicine journal, may open the door to new avenues in drug discovery to combat dementia, which affects 850,000 people in the UK.