

Dementia

Dementia is a global term used to describe a group of symptoms, there are more than 40 different diseases, that produce dementia like symptoms, Alzheimer's Disease is the most common form followed by Multi Infarct (vascular Dementia).

If you have lost or are losing your ability to

- Learn
- Think
- Reason
- Remember

it is likely that you are suffering from some kind of Dementia. These symptoms can be caused by other things too, like, infections – water or chest. Poor diet – lack of some essential vitamins, and dehydration.

Symptoms of Alzheimer's disease / Dementia

The symptoms of Alzheimer's disease progress slowly over several years. Sometimes these symptoms are confused with other conditions and may initially be put down to old age.

The rate at which the symptoms progress is different for each individual and it's not possible to predict exactly how quickly or slowly the symptoms will progress.

In some cases, infections, medications, strokes or delirium can be responsible for symptoms getting worse. Anyone with Alzheimer's disease whose symptoms are rapidly getting worse should be seen by a doctor, so these can be managed.

Early symptoms

In the early stages, the main symptom of Alzheimer's disease / Dementia, is memory lapses. For example, someone with early Dementia may:

- forget about recent conversations or events, or misplace items
- forget the names of places and objects, or have trouble thinking of the right word
- repeat themselves regularly, such as asking the same question several times
- show poor judgement or find it harder to make decisions
- become less flexible and more hesitant to try new things

There are often signs of mood changes, such as increasing anxiety or agitation, or periods of confusion.

Yes we have just described you on a bad day, please read on....

Middle-stage symptoms

As Alzheimer's disease / Dementia develops, memory problems will get worse. Someone with the condition may find it increasingly difficult to remember the names of people they know and may struggle to recognise their family and friends.

Other symptoms may also develop, such as:

- increasing confusion and disorientation
- getting lost, or wandering, not knowing what time of day it is
- obsessive, repetitive or impulsive behaviour
- delusions (believing things that are untrue) or feeling paranoid and suspicious
- problems with speech – Dysphasia
- disturbed sleep
- changes in mood, such as frequent mood swings
- depression and feeling increasingly anxious, frustrated or agitated
- difficulty performing spatial tasks, such as judging distances - Dyspraxia
- hallucinations

At this stage, someone with Dementia will need support to help them with their everyday living.

If you think you, or someone you know may have Dementia, get them to see their GP, let the GP know your concerns beforehand if you can. Dementia is NOT part of the ageing process, that's why it is important to get checked out, the symptoms could be the result of other health conditions and NOT Dementia.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER NOT EVERY PERSON WITH DEMENTIA WILL HAVE ALL OF THESE SYMPTOMS

You are more likely to not have dementia than to have it, even though you had many of the first set of symptoms, that is just brain clutter / modern life 7.1% of people over 65 have some form of Dementia, or, as we prefer to say 92.9% have not! (Source: Prince, M et al 2014 Dementia UK)

If you would like to chat about Dementia, before or after a diagnosis please contact us.