

Educational Links (English):

- ❖ <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/partnersincarecampaign/alzheimersdementias.aspx>
- ❖ <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/problemsdisorders/dementiakeyfacts.aspx>
- ❖ <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/problemsdisorders/dementiaandmemoryproblems.aspx>
- ❖ <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/PDF/Alzheimers%20Disease%20and%20Dementia%20leaflet.pdf>
- ❖ <http://www.alz.org/health-care-professionals/medical-management-patient-care.asp>
- ❖ <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/dementia/home/ovc-20198502>
- ❖ http://www.alz.org/alzheimers_disease_what_is_alzheimers.asp
- ❖ <https://www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers/publication/alzheimers-disease-fact-sheet>

Support Links:

- ❖ Alzheimer's Association - <http://www.alz.org/>
- ❖ Alzheimer's Foundation - <http://www.alzfdn.org/>
- ❖ Alzheimer's Connected - <https://www.alzconnected.org/>
- ❖ Community Resource Finding - <http://www.communityresourcefinder.org/>



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Lumos Psychiatric Services



Educational Booklet: Major Neurocognitive Disorder (Dementia)

Dementia is a general term that describes the loss of thinking, memory and reasoning to such an extent that it seriously affects people's ability to do their daily activities. Dementia is not in itself a disease, but a group of symptoms caused by certain diseases and conditions.

Symptoms of dementia include difficulty with many areas of mental function, including:

- ❖ Emotional behavior or personality
- ❖ Language
- ❖ Memory
- ❖ Perception
- ❖ Thought and judgment (cognitive skills)

Dementia affects each person differently, depending on the impact of the disease and the personality of the subject before they start developing it.

Early stage: often goes unnoticed, as the onset is gradual. The most common symptoms include:

- ❖ Tendency to forget;
- ❖ Loss of notion of time;
- ❖ Space dislocation, even in known places.

Intermediate stage: As dementia evolves into the middle stage, signs and symptoms become more apparent and more limiting. At this stage the affected persons:

- ❖ They begin to forget recent events, as well as the names of people;

- ❖ They are delocated in their own home;
- ❖ They are becoming more and more difficult to communicate;
- ❖ They begin to need help with grooming and personal care;
- ❖ They experience behavioral changes, for example, they go around the house or repeat the same questions.

Late stage: in the last stage of the disease, dependence and inactivity are almost total. Memory disturbances are severe and symptoms and physical signs become more apparent. Symptoms include:

- ❖ Increasing dislocation in time and space;
- ❖ Difficulty recognizing family and friends;
- ❖ A growing need for self-care assistance;
- ❖ Difficulty walking;
- ❖ Behavioral disturbances that can be exacerbated and lead to aggression.

Most common causes of dementia:

The causes of dementia are multiple and diverse. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia: it is estimated to account for 60% to 70% of cases. Other common forms are vascular dementia, Lewy body dementia (abnormal protein aggregates inside nerve cells) and a group of diseases that can contribute to frontotemporal dementia (frontal lobe degeneration brain). The boundaries between different forms of dementia are diffuse and mixed forms often co-exist.

Diagnosis of dementia:

There is no single test to determine if a person has dementia. Doctors diagnose Alzheimer's and other types of dementia based on a detailed medical history, physical evaluation, lab tests, and characteristic changes in associated reasoning, daily functioning, and behavior with every type of dementia. Doctors can determine if a person has dementia with a high level of accuracy. However, it is more difficult to determine the exact type of dementia as symptoms and brain changes of different dementias can match.

Treatment and care of dementia:

Dementia treatments depend on its cause. In cases of more progressive dementia, such as Alzheimer's disease, there is no cure or treatment that delays or stops its progression. However, there are medication treatments that can help the patient temporarily with symptoms. The same medications used to treat Alzheimer's are often prescribed to help overcome symptoms of other types of dementia. Medication-free therapies can also relieve some symptoms of dementia.

What can you do?

Cardiovascular risk factors: Your brain is nourished through one of the richest networks of blood vessels in your body. Anything that damages the blood vessels in any part of your body can damage the blood vessels in your brain, depriving brain cells of receiving the fundamental food and oxygen.

You can help protect your brain with some of the same strategies that protect your heart: **not smoking, maintaining a healthy weight, and keeping blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar at recommended levels.**

Physical exercise: Regular physical exercise can help lower the risk of some types of dementia by increasing blood and oxygen flow to the brain.

Eating: What you eat can have a big impact on your brain's health through its effect on your heart health. The best current test suggests that eating patterns to maintain a healthy heart, such as a Mediterranean diet, can also help protect your brain.

For questions or concerns, discuss it with your doctor.