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# Dementia eBook

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# Introduction to Dementia



Understanding dementia is extremely difficult. It can be very hard to grasp as there is a lot of factors to it.

Dementia is not a single disease. It's terminology used to cover range of individual medical conditions. Disorders grouped under the term dementia are caused by irregular changes to the brain. These changes lead to a decline in cognitive skills, ways of thinking and can have serious effects on daily life and the ability to remain independent.

Dementia is a disease that affects and causes deterioration in memory, thinking, behaviour and the ability to perform everyday activities. Although dementia mainly affects older people, it is not a normal part of ageing.

Within this booklet you will learn about Dementia and the effects it has on your loved ones.



# What is Dementia?



**Dementia is a result of brain cells being damaged which interferes with their ability to communicate with each other properly. These damaged brain cells cannot communicate as they normally would resulting in changes in thinking, behaviour and feelings.**

Although early signs of dementia can be hard to spot, there are some which are more common than others and can be easier to notice.

## Some of these include:

- Memory loss or problems, mainly short term
- Easily confused
- Struggle to concentrate
- Changes to personality or usual behaviour
- Feeling more withdrawn or depressed
- Finding everyday tasks hard to complete



# Types of Dementia

- 1 **Alzheimer's disease** - Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia.
- 2 **Vascular dementia** - This second most common type of dementia is caused by damage to the vessels that supply blood to your brain.
- 3 **Lewy body dementia** - Lewy bodies are abnormal balloon like clumps of protein that have been found in the brains of people with Lewy body dementia, Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease. This is one of the more common types of progressive dementia.
- 4 **Frontotemporal dementia** - This is a group of diseases characterized by the breakdown (degeneration) of nerve cells and their connections in the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain, the areas generally associated with personality, behaviour and language.
- 5 **Mixed dementia** - Autopsy studies of the brains of people 80 and older who had dementia indicate that many had a combination of several causes, such as Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia and Lewy body dementia.

# Signs and symptoms

Early signs and symptoms of Dementia can be hard to notice and although the early signs vary, there are some common ones to look out for.

## Common signs and symptoms of Dementia include:

- Memory or loss problems, mainly short term
- Easily confused
- Struggle to concentrate
- Changes to personality or usual behaviour
- Feeling more withdrawn or depressed
- Finding everyday tasks hard to complete
- Difficulty with visual and spatial abilities, such as getting lost while driving
- Inappropriate behaviour



## Seven pieces of information you should expect at diagnosis

- ① Your type of dementia and how it will affect you.
- ② Any further tests, treatment, activities or therapies that might help you.
- ③ Who will provide your care and how to contact them, including the professional who will coordinate your care.
- ④ Support groups and charities that can help you.
- ⑤ How dementia can affect your driving and what you need to do.
- ⑥ How your employer should support you if you work (or are looking for work).
- ⑦ Any research studies you could take part in.



# Facts and Statistics

**850,000**  
people suffering  
with dementia in  
the UK\*

Worldwide, around **50 million** people have dementia, and there are nearly **10 million** new cases every year.

## Myth Busters

- All types of memory loss are a sign of dementia
- Dementia is hereditary
- Dementia cannot be prevented
- In healthy people, your brain remains relatively unchanged as you age
- People who often forget things probably have some memory loss or Dementia

**One in five UK adults incorrectly agree** that Dementia is an inevitable part of getting older

Reducing your risk of Dementia requires starting **healthier habits and lifestyle changes straight away**, not waiting until you're a little bit older.





# Reducing your risk of Dementia

There's no certain way to prevent all types of dementia, as researchers are still investigating how the condition develops. However, there's good evidence that a healthy lifestyle can help reduce your risk of developing dementia when you're older.

## Risk factors for Dementia

A risk factor is something that increases your likelihood of developing a condition. The research concluded that by modifying the risk factors we are able to change, our risk of dementia could be reduced by around a third.

### Some dementia risk factors are difficult or impossible to change. These include:

- **Age:** the older you are, the more likely you are to develop dementia. However, dementia is not a natural part of ageing
- **Genes:** in general, genes alone are not thought to cause dementia. However, certain genetic factors are involved with some of the less common types. Dementia usually develops because of a combination of genetic and "environmental" factors, such as smoking and a lack of regular exercise
- Lower levels of **education**

## What can we do?

We can't change our age or our genes, and there is currently no way we can completely prevent dementia. However, there are some simple steps we can all take to help lower our risk.

Risk factors for cardiovascular disease (like high blood pressure and stroke) are also risk factors for dementia, so what is good for your heart is good for your brain. Looking after your health, cutting out smoking and being physically active on a regular basis will help lower your risk of cardiovascular disease. It's likely you'll be lowering your risk of dementia too, particularly vascular dementia and Alzheimer's disease.





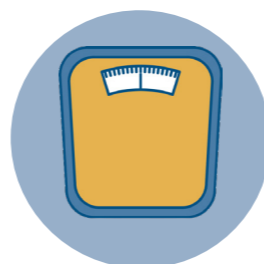
# Good for the heart Good for the brain

Experts agree that what's good for your heart is also good for your brain. This means you can help **reduce your risk of dementia by living a healthier lifestyle.** Below are some of the areas which have the greatest effect on overall health, the risks associated with them and what you can do to be healthier.



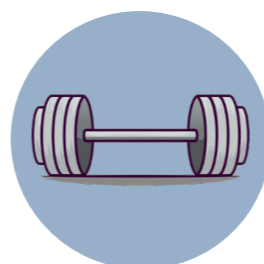
**The risk:** a diet that's high in saturated fat, salt and sugar, and low in fibre, can increase your risk of high blood pressure, high cholesterol, becoming overweight or obese, and type 2 diabetes.

**What you can do:** eat a healthy, balanced diet following the Eatwell Guide.



**The risk:** being overweight or obese can increase your blood pressure and the risk of type 2 diabetes, both of which are linked to a higher risk of Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia.

**What you can do:** check if your weight is within the healthy range using the healthy weight calculator. If you are overweight or obese, even losing 5% to 10% of the excess weight can help reduce your risk of dementia.



**The risk:** a lack of regular physical activity can increase your risk of heart disease, becoming overweight or obese, and type 2 diabetes, which are all linked to a higher risk of dementia. Older adults who do not exercise are also more likely to have problems with memory or thinking (known as cognitive ability).

**What you can do:** follow the recommended guidelines of doing at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week, such as brisk walking, cycling or dancing. You should also do strengthening exercises at least twice a week, such as gardening or yoga.



**The risk:** smoking causes your arteries to become narrower, which can raise your blood pressure. It also increases your risk of cardiovascular disease, as well as several types of cancer.

**What you can do:** if you smoke, try to quit. Visit the NHS Smokefree website, or call the free Smokefree National Helpline on 0300 123 1044 for advice and information.

When you feel ready for this discussion, you should be offered support and information to discuss:



- 1 Why it's helpful to plan ahead
- 2 Your wishes, preferences and beliefs for your future care (advance statement).
- 3 Whether you want to refuse any specific medical treatment at some time in the future (advance decision)
- 4 Making legal decisions about your health and welfare, and property and money if you can no longer make them yourself (lasting power of attorney)
- 5 Where you would prefer to be cared for, including at the end of your life

# Planning for your future

When you have a diagnosis of dementia, it's important to plan for the future and think of what support may be needed down the line. Dementia is progressive and as time passes your symptoms will get worse. You will need more support and may no longer be able to manage at home on your own. It can be hard to know when this point has come.

Planning for the future could be about the type of care you want, or what to do if you want to live at home but you can no longer live alone. This can be more important when you live alone because you may not have someone who knows what you want and what your preferences are.

## Caring for someone suffering from dementia

Anyone can suffer from dementia and it can have devastating effects on friendships and families. The more support you can give someone suffering from dementia, the better life they can live, especially in the early stages.

There are some really simple steps you can take to help someone suffering from dementia and these things are easy to carry out.







\*This is a basis of what we offer, our care plans are personalised to your needs\*



# Caring for someone With Dementia

Anyone can suffer from dementia and it can have devastating effects on friendships and families. The more support you can give someone suffering from dementia, the better life they can live, especially in the early stages.

## Here are our top tips for caring for someone with dementia:

-  **Always treat them with respect and dignity**  
It is best to focus on what the person can do, rather than what they can't. Promote positive thinking and encourage them to complete tasks they are comfortable with.
-  **Be a good listener and always have a friendly manner**  
Having patience is key. Support and accept that the person may be incorrect with certain things, but don't always be so quick to correct them on everything.
-  **Help out where and when you can**  
If you can make their life easier, do so. It may be cooking a meal or running an errand for them. Help reduce the daily stress they may encounter.
-  **Check-in on others as well**  
It is not just the person suffering from dementia who is affected. Their partner, children and grandchildren will be affected. It has an effect on everyone. Think of the support you could offer to them, can you do something to help one of them.
-  **Rest and respite**  
Caring for someone with dementia can be stressful and demanding. Our care packages provide respite for family carers so that you can enjoy your time together.
-  **Do your research and find out more**  
Understanding dementia and the things someone may be going through help to make it easier to help someone suffering from dementia





# Support Available

In the early stages of dementia, many people are able to enjoy life in the same way as before their diagnosis, but as symptoms get worse, the person may feel anxious, stressed and scared at not being able to remember things, follow conversations or concentrate.

This is when further support may be needed to ensure the person suffering from dementia is safe and well looked after. There is a great support network available for people suffering from dementia which ranges from charities and community groups to paid professional help.

## Dementia charities

There is a number of dementia charities that offer free advice and support along with great information on what to do for someone who suffers from dementia.

Alzheimer's Society is the UK's leading dementia charity. They campaign for change, fund research to find a cure and support people living with dementia today. Dementia UK is a charity that provides Admiral Nurses for families affected by dementia.



## Community groups

Staying active in the community and getting attending the local events or involvement in groups such as Dementia Cafe's is especially important. There is many social and interactive cafes for people living with dementia, their family and carers to attend which has a particular focus on involvement and entertainment.

Alzheimer's Society's Dementia Friends programme is the biggest ever initiative to change people's perceptions of dementia. It aims to transform the way the nation thinks, acts and talks about the condition.

## Paid support

There is a lot of options out there when it comes to paid support and what is available can vary a lot. Depending on the needs of the person suffering from dementia there is care available which could come in the form of a residential home or home care.

**Residential home** - People with dementia might need to make the move into a residential home for a number of reasons. Their needs might have increased as their dementia has progressed, or because of a crisis such as a hospital admission. It might be because the family or carer is no longer able to support the person. Whatever the reason, the move can be really difficult, practically and emotionally, for everyone involved.

**Home care** - This is often the preferred option for people suffering from dementia as their home is the place they feel most comfortable and safe. Home care includes a wide range of services provided in the home, rather than in a hospital or care facility. It can allow a person with dementia to stay in his or her own home, which has a whole host of benefits. It also can be of great assistance to caregivers as the person receiving care is a lot more at ease and can still have their independence.





# Dementia Care at home

92%

of us don't want to go into a Care Home. Thankfully, Home Care is a cost-effective alternative that offers a more personalised tailored service to a care home. It also has endless benefits for mental health and wellbeing.

## The advantages of home care

Home care can have massive benefits when receiving care for things such as Dementia and Alzheimer's, it is a 24hr service and it is suited to an individual's needs, it can be as little as a 30-minute visit a week ranging to full-time live-in care.

## The advantages of home care include:

- **Remain independent** – Losing independence is something we want to avoid at all costs. It can sometimes be the biggest worry when considering care options. Receiving Care at Home allows you to keep that independence that you already have. You are able to live to your own schedule, choose when to get up, eat, sleep, and socialise. Home care works around you your time.
- **Surroundings you are familiar with** – Being surround by the things you are most familiar with makes you instantly at ease. It could be that favourite chair near the window, your own bed, your favourite mug or the neighbours they've known for years.
- **Care personalised to you** – A complete bespoke and personalised care plan that is tailored to your needs as well as how you live your everyday life, so you can continue to live as you normally would but with that extra support when needed.
- **Health care in your own home** – A personalised care plan can mean it can be dedicated around your health. Home health care allows you to receive Recovery time is quicker, pain levels reduced, and most importantly the flexibility to recover at your own pace in familiar surroundings.
- **Stay in your community** – Home Care gives the opportunity for you to continue to live in your community allowing your family and friends to be an integral part of your care.

## Dementia care packages

Our specialist dementia care packages can provide the essential support you need during this difficult time. We sensitively respond to the individual needs of you and your family. Our flexible services are tailored to fit with your chosen lifestyle so you continue to enjoy the important things in your life.

People with dementia need to have their dignity and privacy respected at all times. We recognise that people are often upset or embarrassed because of the early onset of dementia.





# Benefits of home care

- 1 Remain independent living in your in own home
- 2 Live in the local community that you know among friends who can visit at any time
- 3 Avoidance of the potential stress of selling a family home
- 4 Married couples and partners may continue to live together
- 5 The freedom to choose what and when to eat, with meals prepared if required
- 6 One to one tailored person centred care
- 7 Continued enjoyment of a garden and gardening
- 8 Avoid separation from much loved pets







**Safe**

**Peace of mind**

**Make it Outstanding**

**Leading (the way)**

**Please don't hesitate to contact us to speak to someone in our care team.**

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 [bluebirdcare.co.uk/newcastle](http://bluebirdcare.co.uk/newcastle)

Inspected and rated

**Outstanding** ★



We're extremely proud to have been rated as overall Outstanding by our regulators CQC. This is the highest grade that can be achieved and is a testament to the whole team for their commitment and dedication to living our values ever single day.