

What is dementia?

Dementia is a group of symptoms (signs) that show that the brain has a disease. As this disease causes changes in the brain, it cannot work properly.

Only some people get dementia. It does not happen to everyone as they get older.

Most people with dementia are over 65 years old. But younger people can also get dementia and this is called young-onset dementia.

Most people with dementia have Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, or dementia with Lewy bodies (DLB). Fewer people have frontotemporal dementia (FTD). There are other types of dementia that smaller numbers of people get.

Changes that happen with dementia

A person with dementia may forget things and be confused. They may think, feel, speak and act differently. They can be confused. These changes can be small but they will get worse. How quickly this happens can be very different from person to person.

If you notice any changes and are worried about yourself or someone else, speak to your doctor. For support, call Alzheimer's Society on **0333 150 3456**.

What causes dementia?

It is not known what exactly causes dementia, but some things increase a person's chances of getting it. These include getting older, brain injuries, lack of physical activity, unhealthy diet, too much alcohol and smoking. But dementia can affect anyone. Some people are born with traits that make them more likely to get dementia when they are older.

There is a lot of research looking into the brain and why dementia develops.

Can a person get better from dementia?

While there is no cure for dementia, a person can live well with it. Staying healthy and getting the right support can be helpful.

Some people with dementia need a lot of help. Others may not need help for a long time after they find out they have dementia. Dementia shortens how long a person will live for. However, people can live with it for many years.



Factsheet 400, **What is dementia?** has more information. To read it, go to **[alzheimers.org.uk/what-is-dementia](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/what-is-dementia)**



We are here for you. If you are worried about dementia, call us on **0333 150 3456**. We can arrange to speak with you in any language.



Join our online community of people affected by dementia – go to **[forum.alzheimers.org.uk](https://www.forum.alzheimers.org.uk)**
To find support in your area, go to **[alzheimers.org.uk/dementiadirctory](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/dementiadirctory)**



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