



YOUR GUIDE TO DEMENTIA CARE

Dementia is a term used to describe a collection of symptoms.

These symptoms may include:

- memory loss,
- loss of ability to reason,
- speech and understanding difficulties.

Dementia is not part of the normal ageing process, it occurs when the brain is affected by specific diseases and conditions.

Types of dementia

The most common form of dementia is Alzheimer's disease. Other forms of dementia include vascular dementia, dementia with Lewy bodies and Pick's disease. There are many other rarer forms of dementia.

Are you concerned about memory?

Diagnosis – first steps

If you are concerned about your own memory, or that of someone you know it is important for you to seek a diagnosis. If you or someone you know is experiencing problems with short term memory, losing things and becoming lost in familiar places, the first place to go is to the GP. The GP will carry out a simple assessment to look for possible treatable causes, as well as signs of dementia.

If the GP thinks that the problem may be due to dementia, he/she will refer the person to a specialist for a formal diagnosis. This can take place at a hospital, memory clinic or other specialist location. Some assessments, following a diagnosis, may take place in the persons own home.

Diagnosis is very important as there may be a treatable cause to the problem. If dementia is diagnosed there are drugs that can treat the symptoms, however at present there is no cure for dementia. Your doctor will be able to give further advice about the availability of any medication that may help.

What happens next?

Having a diagnosis of dementia does not mean that the person is unable to lead an active and fulfilled life. People with dementia will still have feelings of happiness, anger, fear, sadness and all other emotions just the same as anyone else.

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As the disease progresses people may need additional support to enable them to remain as independent as possible. If they are living at home then access to community teams, day centres, memory clinics and domiciliary care may help. If the person with dementia is living in a care home, the staff will understand the difficulties that they may be experiencing and will be able to support them in a safe environment which promotes well being.

Dementia care and the RMBI

Some RMBI Homes have a Dementia Support Unit, where specialist care is provided to those with dementia. To find out whether a Home has a Dementia Support Unit please see our brochure, *Caring for you*, or contact the relevant Home's Home Manager.

In addition, all of our Homes can offer places to people with dementia, following an assessment of their needs. Please contact the Home of your choice for further information.

Where to go for support

If you or someone you know is concerned about their memory, the RMBI's Care Advice Team can advise about the diagnosis of dementia and the support services which exist, both within the RMBI and in general.

The Alzheimer's Society has a helpline, **0845 300 0336**, where you can talk to someone in confidence. The Alzheimer's Society is the leading care and research charity for people with dementia and those who care for them. They also offer a range of information and factsheets.

Your local health and social services departments will have information on what is available to support people with dementia and their carers in your area.

If you or someone you are concerned about is living in a care home, then speak to the manager or your key worker. They will be able to help you to access support from outside agencies, as well as ensuring that the care and support you receive reflects the changing needs of dementia.

How to contact us

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