

# Problems with your memory?



**Alzheimer's  
Research  
UK**

**The Power  
to Defeat  
Dementia**

This introductory booklet aims to help you understand the possible causes of memory problems. You can also find out what to do if you are worried about your memory or someone else's, and how to get more information.

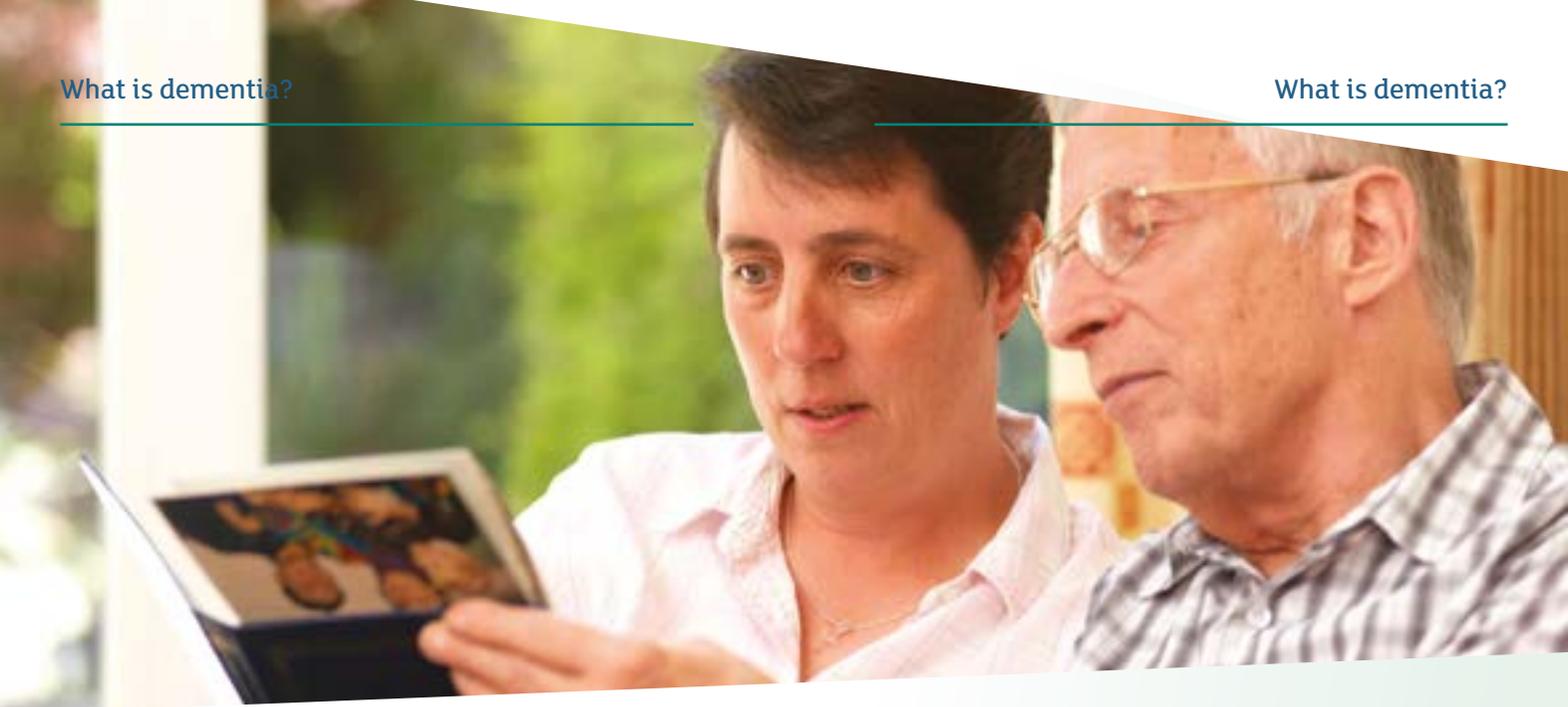
The information was updated in June 2017 and is due to be reviewed in June 2019. Please get in touch if you'd like a version with references or in a different format.

### Memory problems – what is normal?

Most of us forget things every day, like people's names or why we walked into a room, but this is not necessarily a sign of Alzheimer's disease or another type of dementia.

Memory problems can have many causes, including getting older, stress, anxiety or depression. Some medicines have side-effects that can affect your memory. In some cases, memory problems may be a sign of dementia.





## What is dementia?

The word dementia is used to describe a group of symptoms. These include memory problems, a decline in thinking and judgement, confusion and mood changes that impact on a person's everyday life.

Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia. Other types of dementia include vascular dementia, dementia with Lewy bodies and frontotemporal dementia.

Most people with dementia are over 65, but it's estimated that over 40,000 under-65s in the UK have the condition. In people under 65 it is often called early-onset or young-onset dementia.

Alzheimer's and other dementias are brain diseases that slowly damage brain cells over time. This happens in specific areas of the brain that affect how you think, remember and communicate.

With dementia, memory loss is more serious than forgetting things occasionally. Symptoms usually get worse over time. People can find ways to cope with early symptoms so problems are not always obvious to others straight away. However, family and close friends often notice these changes with time.

## Symptoms

Dementia affects people in different ways. The symptoms below could be early signs of dementia if they are new, or getting worse.

If you are worried about any of these symptoms, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor who can investigate what is causing them.



### Memory

Problems remembering recent events or people's names.



### Repetition

Repeating questions.



### Confusion

Uncertainty about the date or time of day.



### Disorientation

For example, getting lost.



### Day-to-day tasks

Forgetting normal daily activities like preparing a meal or washing.



### Behaviour

Personality and mood changes.



### Communication

Difficulty finding the right words or communicating.



### Hallucinations

Seeing or hearing things that are not there.



### Unsteadiness

Falls or movement problems.



### Vision

For example, finding reading hard.



### Diagnosing dementia

Diagnosing dementia early is important. You will be able to get the right help, treatments and support, as well as planning for the future. You may also be able to take part in research studies.

If you go to your doctor with memory problems:



They will ask about your symptoms and medical history and may give you a physical check-up.



They may ask you to do some memory and thinking tests.



Other tests, like brain scans or blood tests, may help the doctor to find the cause of your symptoms.

If your doctor suspects dementia, they may refer you to a memory clinic or a specialist for further tests. If you are diagnosed with dementia your doctor can advise you on the help, support and treatments available. You can choose not to know your diagnosis and who else can be told.



### Send me more information

For free information, simply complete this slip and drop it in a post box. Alternatively, phone us on **0300 111 5555**.

#### I would like to know more about

Dementia: symptoms, diagnosis causes and care (SCIHIAAD)

Treatments for dementia (SCIHITMT)

The latest dementia research (SMTTHINK)

Name

Address

Email

We'd like you to be the first to know about the latest research and how your support makes a difference, as well as ways you can get involved and help fund our life-changing work. We'll keep your information safe and never sell or swap it with anyone.

Let us know how we can contact you (tick below):

**Post**  **Email**

**Telephone**  **Text message**

You can change how we talk to you at any time, by calling **0300 111 5555** or emailing **[enquiries@alzheimersresearchuk.org](mailto:enquiries@alzheimersresearchuk.org)**

Our Privacy Notice can be found at **[www.alzheimersresearchuk.org/privacy-policy](http://www.alzheimersresearchuk.org/privacy-policy)** and explains how we will use and store your information.

## Support

There is help and support available for those worried about or affected by dementia.

The **Admiral Nurse Dementia Helpline** offers practical advice and emotional support to people affected by dementia and those with concerns about obtaining a diagnosis. Call **0800 888 6678**.

**Alzheimer's Society** provides information and services in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Call **0300 222 1122**.

**Alzheimer's Scotland** provides advice and local services in Scotland. Call **0808 808 3000**.



### Find out more

If you have questions about dementia research or want to find out more about how to get involved in studies, contact our **Dementia Research Infoline** on **0300 111 5 111** or email [infoline@alzheimersresearchuk.org](mailto:infoline@alzheimersresearchuk.org)

The Infoline operates 9.00-5.00pm Monday to Friday. Calls cost no more than national rate calls to 01 or 02 numbers and should be included in any free call packages.



# We are the UK's leading research charity aiming to defeat dementia.

We welcome your comments to help us produce the best information for you. You can let us know what you think about this booklet by contacting us using the details below.



## Contact us

Alzheimer's Research UK  
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## General enquiries

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## Dementia Research Infoline

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