

# Problems with your memory?



**Alzheimer's  
Research  
UK**

---

Make breakthroughs possible



This introductory leaflet aims to help you understand the possible causes of memory problems.

You can also find out what to do if you're worried about your memory or someone else's, and how to get more information.

The information was updated in June 2019 and is due to be reviewed in June 2021.

Please contact us 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 dementia.

Memory problems can have many causes, including infection, vitamin deficiency and an underactive thyroid. Stress, anxiety and depression can also affect your memory, and so can some medications. In some cases, however, memory problems are a sign of dementia.



## What is dementia?

The word dementia is used to describe a set of symptoms. These include changes in memory, thinking, judgement and language that impact on a person's everyday life, making daily activities more challenging.

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 younger people it is often called early-onset or young-onset dementia.

Alzheimer's and other diseases that cause dementia usually cause damage to the brain that slowly gets worse with time. The exact symptoms someone has depend on the areas of the brain affected, but memory loss is an early symptom in most forms of dementia.

The memory loss in dementia is more serious than forgetting things occasionally. Symptoms gradually 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, particularly if they are new, or appear to be 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

Forgetting recent events or where things are usually kept.



### Repetition

For example, repeating questions.



### Confusion

Uncertainty about the date or time of day.



### Disorientation

For example, getting lost somewhere familiar.



### Day-to-day tasks

Normal daily activities, like preparing a meal or washing, get harder.



### Behaviour

For example, losing interest in favourite activities.



### Communication

Difficulty finding the right words or following a conversation.



### Hallucinations

Seeing or hearing things that are not there.



### Unsteadiness

Falls or walking problems.



### Vision

For example, finding reading hard.

## Diagnosing dementia

Diagnosing dementia early is important. You will be able to access the right help, treatments and support, and plan 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, including a blood test, to rule out some possible causes.



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



If your doctor suspects dementia, they may refer you to a memory clinic or specialist for further tests. The specialist may arrange for you to have a brain scan.

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 if you prefer. You can also choose who else will 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 affected by memory problems and dementia.

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

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

**Alzheimer 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**

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.



Freeport RTYR-ZUUZ-AULL  
Partridges  
3 Eagle Avenue  
Magnetic Park  
Desborough  
NN14 2WD

We are the UK's leading dementia research charity dedicated to making life-changing breakthroughs in diagnosis, prevention, treatment and cure.

You can let us know what you think about this booklet by contacting us using the details below.



### Contact us

Alzheimer's Research UK  
3 Riverside, Granta Park, Cambridge CB21 6AD



### General enquiries

T: 0300 111 5555  
E: [enquiries@alzheimersresearchuk.org](mailto:enquiries@alzheimersresearchuk.org)



### Dementia Research Infoline

T: 0300 111 5 111  
E: [infoline@alzheimersresearchuk.org](mailto:infoline@alzheimersresearchuk.org)

[www.alzheimersresearchuk.org](http://www.alzheimersresearchuk.org)



This booklet was printed with support from The Perfume Shop who had no input into the content of the booklet.



**Alzheimer's  
Research  
UK**

Make breakthroughs possible

Registered charity number 1077089 and SC042474