

## LIFE WITH DEMENTIA

### 50 Million People Live With Dementia

#### New Cases of Dementia are Diagnosed Every 3 Seconds

Dementia isn't a specific disease. Instead, dementia describes a group of symptoms affecting memory, thinking and social abilities; severely enough to interfere with daily functioning. Though dementia generally involves memory loss, memory loss has different causes, thus memory loss alone doesn't mean you have dementia. Dementia involves damage of nerve cells in the brain, which can occur in several areas of the brain. The damage affects people differently, depending on the area of the brain affected.

Please use this guide as a resource for knowledge and understanding of a dementia diagnosis, treatment, risks and quality of life.

#### 01 | Diagnosis

Diagnosing dementia and determining the type can be challenging. A diagnosis of dementia requires that at least two core mental functions be impaired enough to interfere with daily living. They are memory, language skills, ability to focus and pay attention, ability to reason and problem-solve, and visual perception. No single test can diagnose dementia; doctors must conduct a number of tests in order to come to a more definitive result. Cognitive tests, neuropsychological tests, brain scans, psychiatric evaluations and lab tests all aid in the diagnosis of dementia.

#### 02 | Treatment

Dementia cannot be cured, however symptoms can be managed. Medications can temporarily improve symptoms by boosting chemical messengers in the brain allowing for better brain function. Some medications can treat depression, insomnia or anxiety. Occupational therapy, modifying the environment and modifying tasks can be implemented to help reduce accidents, clutter, noise and other distractions or activities that could become troublesome and dangerous for patients. To promote relaxation in patients some therapies that have been proven successful for those with dementia include; pet therapy, aroma therapy, massage therapy, art therapy and music therapy.

#### 03 | Risks

Patients who are more at risk for dementia are those who are elderly and/or those who are more genetically inclined to have a form of dementia. Significant research is being done to study the effects of diet, exercise and cardiovascular health and their effects on dementia. Better care in these areas may prove for significant reduction of dementia and symptoms alike. Healthier lifestyle choices foster healthier brain connections and activity.

#### 04 | Quality of Life

Anyone with dementia will require additional assistance for everyday functions. Depending on the stage and progress of the disease will determine the amount of care the patient will need. Remembering even the smallest and simplest of self-care can become difficult. Assistance with bathing, eating, exercise, and even dressing could be necessary. Patients can differ from day to day in their symptoms and have different needs. It is important that a patient suffering from dementia has enough support and care as to not fall into deeper decline in health.

For more information on dementia and other neurological conditions, please visit:  
<http://www.ninds.nih.gov/>

#### *Did You Know?*

*1 in 3 senior citizens dies having a form of dementia*

#### References

[https://www.medicinenet.com/dementia/article.htm#what\\_causes\\_dementia](https://www.medicinenet.com/dementia/article.htm#what_causes_dementia)

<http://www.alz.org/what-is-dementia.asp>  
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