

Factsheet 1 What is dementia?



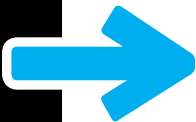
Contents

About dementia	page 1
Who can get dementia?	page 2
How does dementia affect people?	page 3
How can someone tell if they have dementia?	page 4
Is there a cure for dementia?	page 6
Can dementia be prevented?	page 7

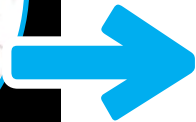
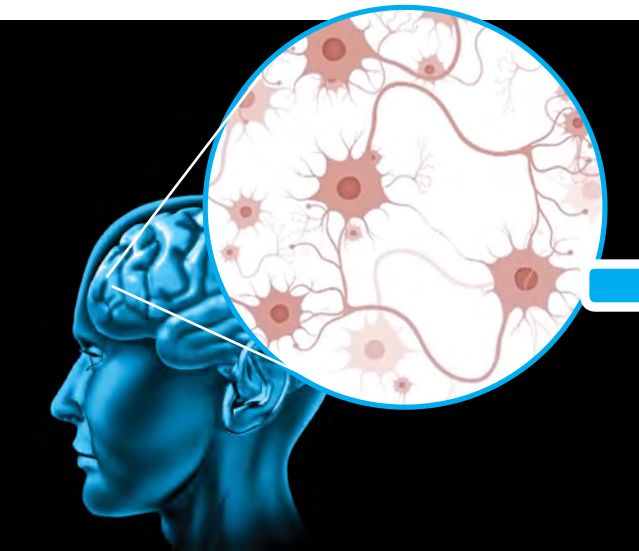
This factsheet is about what dementia is and how it affects people. For more information about supporting someone with dementia, see [Easy Read Factsheet 2, Supporting a person with dementia](#).

Alzheimer's Society worked with the British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD) on the production of this factsheet. Alzheimer's Society and BILD wish to thank Our Way Self Advocacy, Building Bridges Training and the H Team at Grapevine for their invaluable contributions.

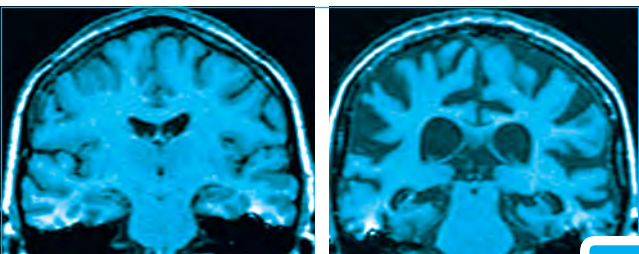
About dementia



Dementia is an illness caused by damage to a person’s brain. You cannot catch dementia from another person.



Cells in the brain die. They cannot grow again.



Healthy brain



Brain of a person with dementia



Changes to the person’s brain lead to memory loss and problems with thinking. Their behaviour may also change.

Image courtesy of Professor Nick Fox, UCL

Who can get dementia?



Dementia mostly affects older people over 65.

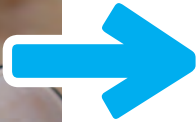


Men and women can get dementia.

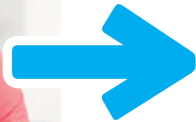


Younger people (under 65) can also get dementia. People with learning disabilities are more likely to get dementia when they are younger.

How does dementia affect people?



Dementia causes memory difficulties. A person may forget names or where they have put things.

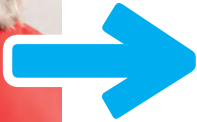


Dementia can affect how people feel and behave. They may be sad or angry or get confused.



A person with dementia can find it hard to do everyday activities like cooking, shopping or getting dressed.

How can someone tell if they have dementia?



If someone is worried about their memory they should see their GP.



The GP will ask the person questions and may send them for a blood test.

How can someone tell if they have dementia?

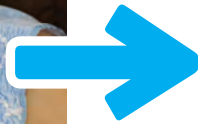


The GP may ask the person to go to the hospital or memory clinic for more tests.

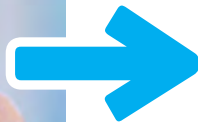


The person may be asked to go for a scan. This helps the doctors to see how the brain is working.

Is there a cure for dementia?



Dementia cannot be cured.
It gradually gets worse
over time.



There are medicines that
can help with some of
the effects of dementia.
The doctor will
explain these.



Scientists are working
to find a cure and
new treatments.

Can dementia be prevented?



Dementia cannot be completely prevented. But there are things people can do that may make it less likely they will get dementia.



Staying active and getting lots of exercise can help prevent dementia.



Eating healthy food and not drinking too much alcohol can help prevent dementia.

Can dementia be prevented?



Not smoking means people are less likely to get dementia.



Being social and seeing family and friends regularly may help prevent dementia.

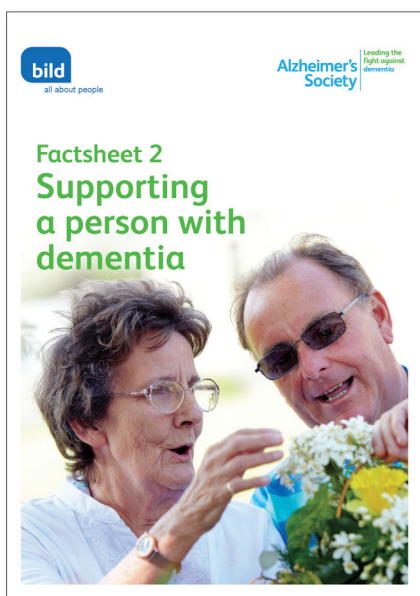


Learning new things and doing puzzles and activities may help prevent dementia.

More information about dementia



For more information
and advice, visit
alzheimers.org.uk
or phone the Helpline on
0300 222 1122



**Easy Read Factsheet 2,
Supporting a person with
dementia** may help you.

Alzheimer's Society is the UK's leading support and research charity for people with dementia, their families and carers.

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