

10 Common Symptoms of Early Dementia

Dementia is not a natural part of ageing but as we age, we slow down, and our skills and abilities decline. This might lead us to believe that we are developing a dementia when what we are actually experiencing is the natural process of ageing. So how can we tell the difference?

Every person is unique, and Dementia affects people differently so no two people will have symptoms that develop in the same way. An individual's personality, general health and social situation are all important factors in determining the impact of Dementia on him or her.

Symptoms vary between Alzheimer's disease and other types of Dementia, but there are broad similarities between them all. The most common signs are memory loss and the loss of practical abilities, which can lead to withdrawal from work or social activities.

The most common early symptoms of dementia are: -

Memory loss - Declining memory, especially short-term memory, is the most common early symptom of dementia. People with ordinary forgetfulness can still remember other facts associated with the thing they have forgotten. For example, they may briefly forget their next-door neighbour's name, but they still know the person they are talking to is their next-door neighbour. A person with dementia will not only forget their neighbour's name but also the context.

Difficulty performing familiar tasks - People with dementia often find it hard to complete everyday tasks that are so familiar we usually do not think about how to do them. A person with dementia may not know in what order to put clothes on or the steps for preparing a meal.

Problems with language - Occasionally everyone has trouble finding the right word but a person with dementia often forgets simple words or substitutes unusual words, making speech or writing hard to understand.

Disorientation to time and place - We sometimes forget the day of the week or where we are going but people with dementia can become lost in familiar places such as the road they live in, forget where they are or how they got there, and not know how to get back home. A person with dementia may also confuse night and day.



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Poor or decreased judgement - People with dementia may dress inappropriately, wearing several layers of clothes on a warm day or very few on a cold day.

Problems with keeping track of things - A person with dementia may find it difficult to follow a conversation or keep up with paying their bills.

Misplacing things - Anyone can temporarily misplace his or her wallet or keys. A person with dementia may put things in unusual places such as an iron in the fridge or a wristwatch in the sugar bowl.

Changes in mood or behaviour - Everyone can become sad or moody from time to time. A person with dementia may become unusually emotional and experience rapid mood swings for no apparent reason. Alternatively, a person with dementia may show less emotion than was usual previously.

Trouble with images and spatial relationships - Image problems are different from typical age-related problems, such as cataracts. People with dementia can have difficulty in reading, judging distances, and in determining colour or contrast.

Withdrawal from work or social activities - At times everyone can become tired of housework, business activities, or social obligations. However, a person with dementia may become very passive, sitting in front of the television for hours, sleeping more than usual, or appear to lose interest in hobbies.

If you think any of these problems are affecting your daily life, or the life of someone you know, you should talk to your doctor, or encourage them to talk to theirs.

If you need any help or guidance, want to find out about other activities and services, or just need someone to talk to who understands your situation, Dementia Friendly Keighley is here for you.

You can call us on **07452 773788** between **10am and 2pm daily**, text (**SMS**) or **WhatsApp 'CALL BACK'** on the same number or leave a message outside of these hours and we will call back as soon as possible. Please note: Times and days of our activities and services are subject to change, so please call for up to date information.

