



Dementia  
Australia™

# Worried about your thinking and memory?

Here's what you can do





Have you noticed changes in your thinking or behaviour? Are you concerned about increasing lapses in your memory?

Maybe you have noticed these changes in a family member or friend?

Many factors can cause changes to thinking or memory loss. These include:

- stress
- pain
- chronic illness
- some medications
- alcohol
- fatigue.

Sometimes, symptoms are a sign of early dementia.

**Major changes in memory are not normal at any age.**

If you are experiencing difficulties, you should see a doctor.

# Talking to your doctor

There is no single medical test to show if someone has dementia.

Talk to your doctor about the difficulties you are experiencing. Your doctor will give you a physical and neurological examination. You may also be referred to a specialist to investigate other possible causes of your symptoms.

During your visit, you should:

- bring a list of your concerns with you
- tell your doctor how long you have had problems and whether they have become worse
- bring a list of the medications, vitamins and supplements you take.



## Get the most from your appointment

- Book a longer appointment.
- Take a friend or family member with you.
- Ask questions and let your doctor know if you do not understand something.
- Take notes during the visit.
- Discuss whether you need further assessment by a specialist.



**It was a relief to get the diagnosis. The worst was not knowing. ”**

Fred, diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease

## The earlier you act the better

Your symptoms may not be caused by dementia. But if they are, earlier diagnosis will be helpful.

You can access support and information to understand how you can live well with dementia and take control of your life. You can plan ahead and take positive steps to live the best life possible.

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**We are so glad we had that early diagnosis. We got the chance to change our lifestyle to match my capabilities. We made definite plans for the future. ”**

Maria, diagnosed with vascular dementia

# What is dementia?

Dementia is the term used to describe the symptoms of a large group of illnesses that cause a progressive decline in a person's functioning. There are many known types of dementia. Alzheimer's disease is the most common type.

Dementia can happen to anybody. It is more common over the age of 65, and especially over the age of 85.

Only a doctor or specialist can properly diagnose dementia.



# Worried about your thinking and memory checklist

If you have concerns about changes in your thinking or memory, or in a family member or friend, complete the checklist below.

**I have trouble remembering recent events**

Rarely     Sometimes     Often

**I have trouble finding the right word**

Rarely     Sometimes     Often

**I have trouble remembering the day and date**

Rarely     Sometimes     Often

**I forget where things are usually kept**

Rarely     Sometimes     Often

**I find it difficult to adjust to changes in my routine**

Rarely     Sometimes     Often

**I have trouble understanding written content or following a story on television**

Rarely     Sometimes     Often



**I find it hard to follow and join in conversations, particularly in groups**

Rarely    Sometimes    Often

**I have problems handling finances, such as banking or calculating change**

Rarely    Sometimes    Often

**I have difficulty with everyday activities such as finding my way in the local shopping centre**

Rarely    Sometimes    Often

**I am losing interest in activities I usually enjoy**

Rarely    Sometimes    Often

**I have difficulties thinking through problems**

Rarely    Sometimes    Often

**Family and/or friends have made comments about my poor memory**

Rarely    Sometimes    Often

**If you have mostly ticked 'sometimes' or 'often', you should see your doctor.**



# About Dementia Australia

Dementia Australia is the source of trusted information, education and services for the estimated half a million Australians living with dementia, and the almost 1.6 million people involved in their care.

We advocate for positive change and support vital research. We are here to support people impacted by dementia, and to enable them to live as well as possible.

No matter how you are impacted by dementia, we are here for you.

# National Dementia Helpline

## 1800 100 500



For language assistance  
call **131 450**

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Find us online  
**dementia.org.au**

