

dementia care

a guide to understanding dementia.

Milton Court
Bethany Hill

Rest Home and Dementia Care
Dementia Care



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understanding
about dementia.

What is Dementia

Dementia is a term used to describe a group of symptoms that affect how well our brain works. Dementia can affect anyone, but as people get older the chances of developing dementia increases.

The symptoms each person experiences depends on which part of the brain are affected. Dementia symptoms include but are not limited to changes in memory, thinking, behaviour, personality and emotions. These changes will have an impact on a person's ability to perform daily tasks.

Dementia is progressive; the changes will gradually spread through the brain. Eventually, the symptoms will get worse.

Dementia is different for everyone; many things are variable including what they experience and how quickly they are affected. What they can do, remember or understand may change every day.



Common Types of Dementia

1. **Alzheimer's Disease**
This is the most common form of dementia. Two-thirds of people with dementia have Alzheimer's disease. The number of nerve cells in the brain gradually reduce and the brain shrinks, resulting in forgetfulness and difficulty in easy tasks.
2. **Vascular Dementia**
This disease is caused by poor blood supply to the brain as a result of a stroke or several mini-strokes or by the build-up of blood vessel disease in the brain. Some people may have a combination of vascular dementia and Alzheimer's disease.
3. **Lewy Body Disease**
This disease comes with the presence of 'Lewy Bodies', which are abnormal clumps of protein in the brain. These will cause changes in movement, thinking, behaviour and alertness. People with Lewy Body disease may also have hallucinations.

DEMENTIA SYMPTOMS

warning signs



MEMORY LOSS

They might have trouble remembering conversations or may ask repeated questions.



SPEECH DIFFICULTY

They might have difficulty following a conversation, or may use the wrong words.



TIME DISORIENTATION

They may be confused about the time and what is supposed to be done.



MISPLACING THINGS

A person with dementia might have trouble remembering conversations or may ask repeated questions.

UNDERSTANDING DEMENTIA

IMPORTANT AND ACCURATE DIAGNOSIS
FOR DEMENTIA

However, these symptoms are not always related to dementia. Factors like stress, depression, diabetes or infections can also cause these symptoms. Therefore, it is always important to seek a doctor for an accurate diagnosis. In Alzheimer's dementia, it typically takes seven to ten years from diagnosis to severe dementia and death.

Since the causes of dementia are not fully understood, there is no cure for it. However, drugs can be prescribed for people with mild and moderate dementia that may slow down the rate of decline for a period of time.



Looking after someone with dementia

SPEECH

Speak slowly and clearly when answering their questions, use eye contact. Don't be distracted when speaking to them.



REDUCE DISTRACTIONS

Reduce distractions, such as the television or radio, especially when you are in a conversation.



SENTENCES

Speak clearly using simple and short sentences. Asking for complicated decisions is likely to be confusing, offer less choices.



ACTIVITIES

Encourage them to start an activity that you know they enjoy, try to engage them with something else



living well
with dementia.



DIAGNOSIS

If you are concerned, then seeking help as soon as possible is advisable.

If you are concerned about a friend, relative or even yourself, then seeking help as soon as possible is advisable. Your General Practitioner should be the first point of call. The GP will want to rule out other conditions that may produce similar symptoms.

The benefits of an early diagnosis include some peace of mind in knowing what is going on, the opportunity to find out more about your condition, access to services and support, and the ability to plan for the future. For some people, medication which might delay the progression of cognitive problems is available.

A GP can diagnose dementia, or the person may be referred to a specialist (a neurologist, geriatrician, psychologist or psychiatrist).

An assessment may include:

- discussing your medical history
- talking to your family/whānau (with your permission)
- undergoing a physical examination
- laboratory tests, which may include blood and urine tests
- cognitive testing, which assesses how your brain is working – in particular your memory, language, attention span and problem-solving
- brain imaging, which looks at the brain's structure and is used to rule out other medical conditions or diagnose the particular type of dementia
- mental health assessment, which may identify treatable conditions such as depression, or manage some symptoms you may be experiencing as part of your dementia.

Your doctor can also refer you to your local Needs Assessment and Service Co-ordination (NASC) organisation, which will assess what support you need.

Finding out that a loved one has dementia is distressing, but understanding that there is a cause for their changing behaviour can be reassuring and it helps you to know what to expect in the future.

Caring for someone with dementia often isn't easy. You and the rest of your family will be doing a lot of adjusting. Just remember there is help out there for you – both practical and emotional.



taking a break

We all need to take a break from whatever we are doing, even if that means taking a break from caring for someone you love.

There's no reason to feel guilty or that you aren't fulfilling your responsibilities. Caring for someone affected by dementia can be stressful, as well as physically and emotionally tiring.

It can also be socially isolating for family/whānau members if they can't leave the person they are caring for. But it's important that anyone in a caring role can take regular breaks. Ideally, they should also feel they can take a weekend away or go on holiday.

Respite care can be for a day programme or in a short-term residential care facility, funded by your local District Health Board (DHB).

We are contracted with Ministry of health to provide these care. It can be helpful to think about respite care as a partnership between yourself and the respite provider, working together to make the most of the time.

Talk to us about what type of respite care is available, and what will work best for you and the person with dementia.

BEHAVIOUR CHANGES

A person's behaviour can change for many reasons. Sometimes it's indeed dementia, which results from changes in the brain that affect a person's memory, mood and behaviour. Dementia affects people in different ways, and a person with dementia may not be able to tell you what is wrong. Understanding why someone is behaving in a particular way may help you to figure out what is happening and to come up with some ideas about how to cope.

Behaviour that is aggressive or challenging can be distressing to both the person with dementia and the carer. It may include hurtful comments, verbal aggression and threats, kicking, pinching or lashing out at people or objects. Try to think about what they might be thinking or experiencing. Ask them questions to help you understand, think about the circumstances in which the outburst occurs, or try a different approach next time.

Doing this might help you to avoid the situation in the future, or at least be understanding or know how to react when it occurs. Hard as it will be, try not to react, or be aggressive or loud in return.

Unless they are endangering themselves or you, give them plenty of space. Perhaps even leave the room to allow both of you to calm down. Try not to dwell on negative feelings about it.

Perhaps the most important thing to remember, when coping with changed behaviour, is not to take it personally. The person wouldn't deliberately hurt your feelings or be aggressive, but dementia may make it difficult to understand what is going on, or for them to be aware of their behaviour.

People with dementia can rarely remember what they have done, and so lose the ability to learn from experience. They may be equally upset by what they think is going on, the atmosphere, or by having lost control, so try to provide lots of reassurance by talking, hand holding or giving a hug if appropriate.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is vital for all of us. In the early stages of dementia, the person may struggle to find the right words, especially to describe objects. As their dementia progresses, they may forget your name and the name of others close to them, and may also confuse generations of their family such as thinking their wife is their mother. This can be distressing for carers and close family and friends.

The memory loss caused by dementia can cause frustration for carers when it results in repetition or failure to understand answers. The vital thing to remember is that the person is not trying to be annoying – they ask the question because they do not know the answer.

They genuinely forget that they have asked the question and that you have answered it. Although it can be wearing, try to remember that each time you respond to the question you are reassuring the person at that moment in time. If you do lose patience, they will not understand the reason and may be hurt or frightened by your reaction.



Personal Care

Helping someone with dementia with their personal care can be extremely time consuming and emotionally exhausting. You will very much be in each other's personal space, and that can take some adjustment – for both of you.

Appearance is important to most of us, and it affects the way other people perceive us. Being well groomed may be important to the person with dementia, and, rightly or wrongly, it may help other people to treat them with the respect they deserve.

It may seem superficial, but if the individual you care for is well dressed and well-groomed, you may also find the situation less complicated. Especially for women, a trip to the hairdressers or beauty salon can be a real treat and an enjoyable experience.



eating drinking

In the early stages of their dementia, the person may be able to cope with providing their food, with some help with the shopping and a few prompts around the kitchen, or perhaps a meal delivery service.

As dementia progresses, it may require someone to be present for at least one meal a day to ensure that they are eating enough. They may forget to eat, or not remember how to cook food properly.

Over time, the person may not be able to remember if they have just eaten, forget what they like and don't like, not recognise foods, or request strange combinations.

Once again, try to remember that they are not just difficult, even though it may be hurtful if you are preparing meals for them, or are concerned about encouraging them to eat.



planning ahead
for residential care.

planning

In the later stages of dementia, it will be helpful for you and others who are helping provide care, to remember details about the person and to know what choices they would make. It is therefore wise to do two particular things, as early as possible after the person's diagnosis:

1. Talk to them about future choices and if they can, write down what they would like to happen at particular stages, especially at the end of life.
2. Get them to record as many things as possible which are essential elements of their life and personality. There may be some things which even you were not aware of.

There are several things you can do to prepare for you and your family's future. You should seek professional legal, financial and medical advice as soon as possible while you can still take part in the discussions, share your wishes, and have the legal capacity to sign any documents.



ENDURING POWER OF ATTORNEY & WILLS

It is important to set up an Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA) as soon as you can. In fact, all adults should have one, even if they're perfectly healthy. EPAs are legal documents in which you nominate a person or people (your 'attorney/s') to look after you and the things you own if you become unable to take care of them yourself.

There are two types of EPA – one for your care and welfare (for decisions about matters such as your medical treatment and where you live) and another for decisions about your finances (bank accounts, assets, property). It is important that you set up an EPA while you are still mentally capable. That's why you should consider seeing a legal professional to set up an EPA as soon as possible after your diagnosis if you haven't already got one in place.

If you don't set up an EPA, when you are no longer able to make decisions for yourself your family will have to apply to the Family Court for the power to make decisions for you and that will cost money and time. It may also mean you end up with someone you didn't choose looking after you and your affairs.



A Will is about how you want your estate to be distributed after your death. A Will is only legal if you were capable of understanding its implications when you signed it. That's why, just as with an EPA, it's recommended you make or update your Will as soon as you can, that you appoint a trusted Executor and that your family and friends know where a copy is kept.



RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME

"A care home may be the best option. You can still be part of their lives."

A person diagnosed with dementia has the freedom to be able to be cared for in a protective environment.

Sometimes, there may be a time where the family is not the best type of care. Then, residential care may be the best choice. Now you will be able to have the support of dementia care professionals.

Needs Assessment

A needs assessment ensures the person with dementia:

- is aware of the services that will help them in their own home.
- has access to specialist medical help that can improve their health
- has help with decision-making around residential care
- is informed of the financial means assessment to gain access to public funding for residential care.

service coordination

Service coordination is the next step in the process, where the support services that are identified are coordinated and put in place for the person with dementia.

With the permission of the individual being assessed, where possible, the service coordinator uses the information from the assessment to explore all options that might be helpful. They then help coordinate these services. As part of this, the person with dementia and the people who care for them will be asked what solutions they think will help them.

If residential care is recommended, the service coordinator will let you know what level of attention the assessment shows is appropriate for the person concerned. They will also help you prioritise what's important, discuss available options, and provide a list of residential facilities for your consideration.





REST HOMES

Rest homes provide 24/7 hour care by trained staff. People at rest homes can do some daily tasks themselves, but cannot live independently in their own home.

DEMENTIA UNIT

Dementia units provide care to people with dementia or other mental illness. Dementia units provide the same services as rest homes in a secure environment and will have staff trained in specialist dementia care.

LONG TERM CARE HOSPITAL

Long-stay hospitals provide 24-hour health care for people with high clinical needs. Most residents cannot move without the help of another person, and need assistance to do most daily tasks.

SPECIALIST LONG TERM CARE

Psychogeriatric care is a high level of care for people with very high levels of dementia or challenging behaviours



the move

planning ahead

If at all possible, introduce the person with dementia to the new facility gradually so the place becomes a little more familiar and a little less confusing and frightening.

Another suggestion is to make a small photo album with short pieces of text to explain who/ what is in the photo, this will give the care facility a way to get to know the person and develop a rapport with them.

Keep as much familiarity as possible ahead of time have the person's room ready with a few photos and familiar items such as recognisable pictures or paintings on the wall, and familiar bed coverings.

Expect a period of adjustment. During this initial moving stage it will take time for both the person with dementia as well as you to adjust to the new situation.



visiting

Visiting is usually very important to both the person with dementia, their family and those who have cared for them, as a way of everyone staying connected. The person with dementia may enjoy seeing other members of the family or old friends.

There is no right number of times to visit or amount of time to stay. The important thing is to make each visit as rewarding as possible.

Children should be very welcome in residential facilities, so encourage grandchildren to visit. If they're young, think about preparing a visiting bag that contains treats and activities to keep them entertained.

Visiting can sometimes be difficult, particularly since the abilities of the person with dementia decline.



VISITING

Try to find some ways to make visiting as comfortable and enjoyable as possible, such as :

- bring in newspapers and magazines to look at together
- read mail together
- play games that have been enjoyed in the past
- listen to music recordings or audio books
- watch a well-loved movie or home movie
- look at photo albums together
- help decorate and tidy the room
- help with personal grooming – washing or brushing hair, painting nails
- help with writing to friends and relatives.
- massaging legs, hands and feet with scented creams or oils
- bringing in perfumes and flowers so they can enjoy the scent
- a gentle kiss or hand-holding for reassuring contact
- let them see you smile, looking at them with affection
- visits from friends and relatives – even though they may not be recognised or remembered, they can still stimulate the person, giving them feelings of comfort and familiarity
- listening to a favourite book or poem being read
- a stroll or push in a wheelchair around the grounds.



MILTON COURT

Milton Court is a boutique rest home providing vibrant, warm and family feeling residential care to our 36 residents for more than 30 years. We are one street back from the beach, in a quiet residential street but on an easy flat road to the beach, public transport and cafes.

Milton Court is set in relaxed, landscaped grounds, with lovely courtyard gardens viewable from lounges, bedrooms and dining room.

- Milton Court is certified by the Ministry of Health to provide age-related residential care services under the Health and Disability Services (Safety) Act 2004. We offer the following types of care:
- Rest Home Level Care
- Secure Dementia Unit
- Respite Care
- Carer Support Care

All our staff are highly skilled, caring individuals with a genuine sense of compassion and understanding. We are committed to providing high standard of care. Staff are trained extensively within the rest home by our very experienced Nurse Manager and also from external sources such as Waitemata District Health Board.

We have expertise in the area of Dementia & behaviour assessment and implementing the appropriate measures for an individual's care. The staff are able to transfer their specialist skills and a long-term, continuous care to all our residents.

At Milton Court, our residents can enjoy assistance and care 24 hours a day from trained and skilled staff with registered nurse supervision and emergency assistance at the push of a button. We will always respect your individuality, your independence and your dignity. We take the time to get to know you, to establish what you want, expect and need and we'll try our best to tailor our services to suit.



BETHANY HILL

Bethany Hill is a 30 bed specialist dementia care rest home that has beautiful views over Whangateau Harbour and Omaha Bay. We are set on more than 2 hectares of land with surrounding native bushes and hills.

Our residents can enjoy watching the birds and guinea fowls playing in the courtyards and also view the chicken coop. These areas have unrestricted access designed specifically to support people with dementia.

- Bethany Hill is certified by the Ministry of Health to provide age-related residential care services under the Health and Disability Services (Safety) Act 2004. We offer the following types of care:
- Specialist Dementia Care
- Day Care
- Under 65 with Disability
- Respite Care
- Carer Support Care

All our staff are highly skilled, caring individuals with a genuine sense of compassion and understanding. We are committed to provide high standard of care. Staff are trained extensively within the rest home by our experienced owner who is a registered nurse as well as a Career Force assessor who works with the staff to ensure their skills, experience and hard work are recognised in line with NZQA requirements.

Our nursing care provides a 24/7 supervision for our residents. Our care plans help ensure that each person we look after is treated with respect and that their choices are maximised.

We encourage residents to carry out small tasks throughout the day, such as helping to lay the table, cleaning, tidying, hanging out washing, folding clothing, feeding the chooks, etc which can help retain self-esteem and involvement in daily life. We have activity coordinators who organise activities, such as arts and crafts, gardening, van outings, exercise and sing along music. Our activities enrich the resident's physical and mental well-being.

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Milton Court Rest Home

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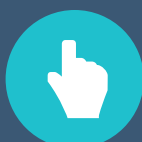
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