

Frequently Asked Questions **About Dementia**



The activity monitoring system
that supports independence



Diagnosing dementia

Q: What are the signs of Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia?

A: Signs of dementia include memory loss, confusion, or failing to find the words. There may be mood changes or increased agitation. Sometimes people start to withdraw socially, or there is a decline in reading, writing and talking.

Q: I have noticed my loved one does not seem to manage things as well as they used to. Is there something I should do?

A: It can be worrying if you start to see a change in a close relative; it may be the early signs of dementia. Encouraging them to go to their GP is a good first step. It's worth bearing in mind that generally, with an early dementia diagnosis more can be done to slow its progress and the greater the likelihood that effective care can be put in place to enable your loved one to lead an active, fulfilled life and to prepare and plan for the future.

Q: My mum recently broke her hip. She has completed her rehabilitation but now seems to be a little forgetful. Should I worry?

A: It's quite normal to be a little confused, with perhaps loss of memory, after a period of disruption like this. Getting someone back home can help. If your mum is still confused after she has had time to settle back into her routine then it makes sense to see her doctor.

Q: My loved one won't admit they have a problem. Should I make them come to terms with it?

A: This can be very difficult; you are concerned about your relative but they don't want to acknowledge or discuss there may be an issue. There's no easy answer and obviously every situation is different. The Alzheimer's Society has put together some tips on how to broach the topic with them.



Understanding dementia

Q: How common is dementia?

A: 820,000 people in the UK have dementia. That's 1 in 88 of the population. Over the next decade the number will grow by 25% to over 1 million, as the number of older people increases. Dementia is most common in older people, but it is not an inevitability of growing old. 1 in 6 of people aged 80+ have dementia. About 25 million people in the UK, more than one in three, know a close family member or friend who has dementia.

Q: What is dementia?

A: Dementia is an umbrella term that describes a group of symptoms caused by the gradual death of brain cells. There are four main types: vascular dementia, Lewy Body Dementia, Alzheimer's Dementia and Pick's Disease, the most common of which is Alzheimer's. You'll find more information at The Alzheimer's Society or NHS Choices.

Q: What are the symptoms of dementia?

A: Dementia symptoms include: memory problems like struggling to remember recent events or forgetting the names of people or everyday objects; losing the thread in a conversation or repeating yourself; mood changes, feeling anxious, sad or frightened; confusion, problems with problem solving or reasoning; withdrawing socially; a decline in reading, writing or communicating.

Q: Is there a cure for dementia?

A: No but treatments can slow the progress of dementia. It is also possible to manage the symptoms, which is frequently easier if your family member is able to remain in their home environment and continue with their day-to-day routine.

Q: Both my parents have suffered from dementia. Is it inevitable that I will?

A: In the majority of cases dementia is not inheritable, but it does depend on the particular cause of dementia. The best option is to talk to your doctor about the particular forms of dementia from which your parents suffered.

Q: Is dementia increasingly inevitable the longer we live?

A: Age is definitely a factor in the onset of dementia, but it does not make it inevitable.

Q: Where can I turn to for objective information?

A: Your local GP, who may refer you to a Memory Service. The Alzheimer's Society, NHS Direct and NHS Inform are all good sources of information.



Arranging and managing the care of your relative

Q: My parent has been diagnosed with dementia. What do I do about care? Are there aids for dementia?

A: The first step is to discuss things with your parent. Most people want to stay in their own home for as long as possible, and the familiar environment will help them. Just Checking enables you to 'stand back and see' your relative's capabilities in their own home, and this will give you valuable insights into how or when in the day it is best to provide support. The local Memory Service, GP or social services should be able to signpost you to services in your area. AT Dementia is a useful site for other aids which might help.

Q: How can I be sure my parent is able to live safely alone in their home?

A: There are many advantages to living at home. The familiar environment and continuing with the day-to-day routine will provide support for dementia sufferers. Your mum or dad will know local places, shops, parks or walks, and may have local friends, neighbours and social groups which are important to them. You can use other telecare to manage safety risks. With the insight Just Checking will give you, you may be able to organise local services, and other members of your family to support you parent in their own home for the time being.

Q: I live a long distance from my parent and can't visit every day. Is there any other way to be certain they are OK?

A: With Just Checking you can log on and check that your parent is OK at any time. You will soon see if there is a daily routine. A network of local friends and neighbours who are willing to call in from time to time, or at your request if you have concerns, is invaluable.

Q: Is a telecare system intrusive?

A: No. A system like Just Checking uses motion sensors that are unobtrusively placed in key rooms. There are no cameras and you can't actually see the person. For people who live alone, any concerns about this type of monitoring need to be balanced against risks to their safety and the need for support. There is less privacy if a person moves to a care home.

Finding Support

Q: My parent has dementia. Is there anywhere I can go to meet / engage with people in a similar situation?

A: There are a number of forums, run by organisations like the Alzheimer's Society and Lewy Body Society.

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