

Dementia is more than forgetfulness

Dementia is a chronic, progressive, and ultimately terminal illness. Dementia causes progressive loss of brain function. **Dementia occurs due to physical changes in the brain that are not reversible.** For some, dementia progresses rapidly, while it takes years to reach an advanced stage for others. People experience the stages of dementia differently. Most people with dementia share similar symptoms, although the symptoms may not occur in the same order or to the same degree.

Types of dementia: Alzheimer's, Lewy body, vascular, frontotemporal or mixed

Dementia progresses differently in everyone.

Many people will experience symptoms such as:

- Getting lost or misplacing objects
- Memory loss, increasing confusion or poor judgment
- Significant memory loss, including loss of events in the past or recognizing family members
- Subtle personality changes, such as becoming more subdued or withdrawn
- Significant personality and behavior changes, often caused by agitation or unfounded suspicion
- Trouble organizing or expressing thoughts
- Difficulty with problem-solving and complex tasks, such as managing finances
- Needing increased assistance with basic tasks, such as eating, bathing, getting dressed and grooming
- Changes in sleep patterns, such as sleeping during the day and feeling restless or wandering at night
- Loss of verbal communication (trouble with words, nonsensical speech, or nonverbal)
- **Loss of physical capabilities, such as walking, sitting, holding one's head up, swallowing, and controlling bowel and bladder**
- Increased episodes of delirium when ill or in the hospital
- Increased infections, such as pneumonia and urinary tract infections