

Dementia 101 – Symptoms and Diagnosis

What is Dementia?

Dementia is a serious brain disease that affects memory, ability to make decisions, daily functioning, as well as mood and behavior. There are many different medical problems that can cause dementia. Dementia may begin as a problem remembering new information but slowly gets worse over time and causes problems with a person's ability to get through the day on their own. In the United States, Alzheimer's disease is the major cause of dementia.

Signs and Symptoms

Sometimes, the first sign of dementia is when a person gets lost while driving, mixes up their medications, or has trouble paying their bills correctly. Signs and symptoms include having difficulty with:

- Remembering new information
- Finding the right word to complete a sentence
- Problem solving
- Focusing on important information
- Controlling emotions

May also include:

- Depression
- Changes in personality

How is Dementia Diagnosed?

To diagnose dementia, doctors will complete a full examination.

This may include:

- Questions about medical history, including family health history
- A physical examination, including checking balance and reflexes
- Collecting information about current medications including prescription and non-prescription medications, vitamins and supplements
- Measuring blood pressure

Have questions? Ask your doctor or health care provider at your next appointment.

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Dementia. (2019). Retrieved from <https://medlineplus.gov/dementia.html>

What is Dementia? (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/what-is-dementia>