

Lewy Body Dementia

There are two kinds of Lewy body dementia (LBD): dementia with Lewy bodies and Parkinson's disease dementia. Dementia is a serious brain disease that affects memory, ability to make decisions, daily functioning, as well as mood and behavior. The early signs of these two diseases may be different, but both have the same changes occurring in the brain. Hallucinations may be the first signs of LBD along with changes in attention and alertness. Parkinson's disease dementia starts with tremors and difficulty moving with memory problems that usually start at least a year after Parkinson's disease was diagnosed.

Signs and Symptoms

- Confusion, problems remembering new information
- Changing levels of alertness and thinking
- Hallucinations (seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, or smelling something that is not there)
- Trouble sleeping including acting out dreams that sometimes leads to bed partners getting punched and kicked at night
- Trouble walking and moving; stiffness; frequent falls
- Depression and loss of interest in activities that used to be fun or interesting
- Poor control of body functions that leads to constipation or low blood pressure especially when standing up.

What causes Lewy body dementia?

We do not understand what causes LBD at this time. Most people who are diagnosed with LBD have no family history of this disease.

How is Lewy body dementia diagnosed?

There is no special test to diagnose LBD. Doctors make the diagnosis by getting a full medical history and completing a series of tests. Blood tests may be ordered to make sure there are no other problems that affect the brain. Your doctor may order a brain scan and sometimes a sleep study.

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