

Understanding Dementia



In this factsheet, you will learn about:

- Types of dementia
- Changes that may occur over time for people living with dementia

What is dementia?

Dementia

Dementia is an umbrella term that describes a set of symptoms that can be caused by a variety of disorders.

Alzheimer's Disease

- The most common type of dementia (50-65% of dementia cases)
- Gradual decline of the brain tissue and function over time
- Usually occurs after age 65, but can be diagnosed much earlier

Vascular Dementia

- Occurs when blood, nutrients, and oxygen do not reach the brain
- Can happen with stroke or vascular disease in the brain

Frontotemporal Dementia

- Symptoms usually start in mid-to-late life (45 to 65 years)
- Progressive decline of the front and sides of the brain
- Changes in personality and behaviour are common

Lewy Body Dementia

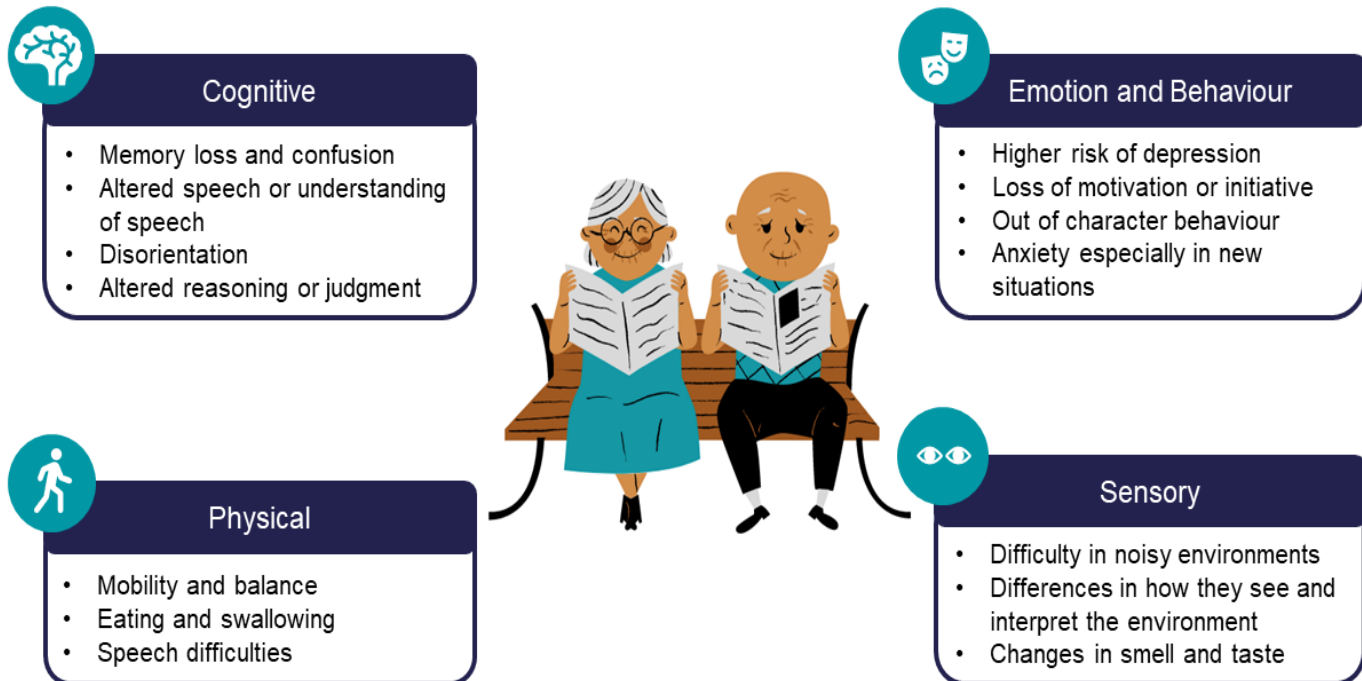
- Clumps of protein that form in the brain (Lewy bodies)
- Often affects movement, similar to Parkinson's disease

Mixed Dementia

- Diagnosed when 2 or more types of dementia are present
- Often includes both Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia

Learn more and get support at: www.alzheimer.ca

Changes that may be experienced with dementia*



The way that people communicate their feelings of frustration, distress, pain, or sadness may change with dementia. People living with dementia may rely on non-verbal communication more often to express their feelings (e.g., facial expressions, body language, tone of voice). This non-verbal communication is sometimes seen as a problem even though it is a normal response to the events around them. By paying attention to the person living with dementia and their responses, people can better understand their feelings, the cause of them, and how to help the person living with dementia.

Even with these changes, people living with dementia retain many abilities. They can have meaningful lives by continuing to participate in activities that they enjoy or by discovering new hobbies. Take each moment at a time, focus on what is possible, and adapt to changes as they come.

Note: A person that experiences some of these changes does not necessarily have dementia. If you or a person you care about experiences these changes, please talk to your primary healthcare provider.

Brought to you by the University of Waterloo and University of Northern British Columbia.

Learn more! Explore helpful resources and tools at: www.dementiawellnesscanada.com