

Living with dementia

Dementia is a progressive disease, which means symptoms may be mild at first but will get worse over time.

However, it is still possible to live well with a diagnosis of dementia, if given the right support.

Living well with dementia is supported by continuing to keep active and doing things you already enjoy as well as joining new groups and finding new activities or interests. However, to do this an individual may need support from family, friends and services.

Awareness of dementia can help family carers to support a relative living with dementia to remain a valued member of the family, engaging in family events and social gatherings.

As dementia progresses, individuals will be subjected to changes in their ability to carry out everyday tasks. These can include the ability to remember, difficulties communicating, developing psychological issues such as becoming aggressive or to become withdrawn, changes in food taste, reverting to a mother tongue language, becoming incontinent (losing control of bladder or bowel function), needing increasing support with personal care and eating.

However, no two people may experience dementia symptoms in the same way.

Individuals and family carers can access support via their GP practice. There may be medication or other treatments that can slow the illness or treat the symptoms.

Information and advice is also available from several national organisations, including Alzheimer's Society, Dementia UK and Carers UK.

For more information on dementia

Visit www.nhs.uk/conditions/dementia/

For translated materials on dementia, visit www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/publications-factsheets-accessible-resources/information-in-your-language

To download an activity booklet to support someone you care for with dementia from an ethnic minority background, visit www.england.nhs.uk/publication/dementia-care-activity-booklets/

What is dementia?

A leaflet for ethnic minority communities



What is dementia and how does it impact black, Asian and minority ethnic communities?

The word 'dementia' describes a set of symptoms. It is caused by different diseases that damage the brain.

The symptoms get worse over time and include:



memory loss



changes in behaviour



problems with language and understanding



confusion and needing help with daily tasks

Dementia is **not** a natural part of ageing. It is caused when a disease damages nerve cells in the brain.

As the number of ethnic minority people increases in England, there is expected to be a 7-8 times increase in dementia amongst these communities. Whilst statistics show that the likelihood of dementia increases as we age, people from ethnic minority communities are also more likely to get dementia at a younger age.

Reduce your risk

Ways you can reduce your risk of dementia:

- Stay physically active
- Eat healthily
- Don't smoke
- Drink less alcohol
- Stay mentally and socially active
- Take control of your health

Breaking the taboo

The stigma around dementia means that it can be a taboo subject for many people living with dementia from an ethnic minority community. This can lead to individuals and families hiding away and not seeking support.

However, accessing support early is important for the person living with dementia, their family and their carers.

If you are concerned about yourself or a relative, speak to your local GP Practice.

Accessing support

If you are worried that you or a relative may have dementia, speak to your GP practice.

You will receive an initial assessment which may lead to a referral to a specialist, such as a geriatrician.

You can attend these appointments with a friend or family member. A translator can be requested if required.

It may be hard talking about your problems with a healthcare professional, especially if you don't know them. However, healthcare professionals will treat everything you share confidentially and talking to them will mean you get the right support as early as possible. Getting a diagnosis early has many benefits including:

- access to support
- the offer of benefits
- information to help you and people caring for you to understand what you're going through

