

Please feel free to contact any of your Health Champions for help, advice or with suggestions of how to promote health and wellbeing in our school.

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What Is Dementia?

Dementia is not a single illness but a group of symptoms caused by diseases of the brain, most commonly Alzheimer's disease. 1 in 3 people over 65 will develop dementia but it can also affect younger people. The second most common type of dementia is vascular dementia. High blood pressure, heart problems, high cholesterol and diabetes all increase a person's chances of developing vascular dementia.

The symptoms of dementia can include memory loss, confusion and difficulty thinking things through, problem-solving and language. It can affect a person's mood or cause changes in behaviour that are out of character.

Signs To Look Out For

Although there are many reasons for memory loss, apart from dementia, if memory loss is affecting your daily life or that of a loved one you should speak to your GP without delay, especially if you notice any of the following:

- Being able to recall things that happened in the past but struggling to remember recent events .
- Finding it hard to follow conversations or TV programmes.
- Forgetting names of everyday objects or friends.
- Being unable to recall things you have seen, read or heard.
- Losing the thread of what you are saying.
- Having problems with thinking or reasoning.
- Feeling anxious, depressed or angry.
- Feeling confused, even when in familiar surroundings or getting lost on a familiar journey.
- People noticing and making comments about your loss of memory.

Getting Help

If you are concerned about memory problems, would like to find out more about the symptoms of dementia or are caring for someone affected by it, contact the Alzheimer's Society, the UK's leading support and research charity for people with dementia, their families and carers. To find out more visit www.alzheimers.org.uk or phone 0300 222 1122.



Become a Dementia Friend



The Alzheimer's Society's Dementia Friends programme is the biggest ever initiative to change people's perceptions of dementia hoping to transform the way society thinks, talks and acts about the condition. Become a dementia friend today to understand a bit more about it and the ways you can help our communities become more dementia friendly. To register online visit www.dementiafriends.org.uk



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things you should know about dementia

Leading the fight
against dementia
Alzheimer's
Society

1. Dementia is not a natural part of the ageing process.
2. Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain.
3. It is not just about losing your memory.
4. It's possible to live well with it.
5. There is more to the person than the dementia.



1. Dementia is not a natural part of ageing

It's true that dementia is more common among over-65s, and some people do become more forgetful as they get older or during times of stress or illness. But dementia is a different sort of forgetfulness. The memory loss will be more noticeable, and may be accompanied by mood changes and confusion. It's important to ask a GP to check out any unusual symptoms as these can sometimes be treated with appropriate medication.

2. Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain

Dementia is the name for a collection of symptoms that include memory loss, mood changes and problems with communication and reasoning. These symptoms are brought about by a number of diseases that cause changes in the brain. The most common of these is Alzheimer's disease, which changes the chemistry and structure of the brain causing the brain cells to die. Other types of dementia include vascular dementia and Pick's disease.

3. It's not just about losing your memory

People often think of dementia as a form of memory loss, and usually it does start by affecting people's short-term memory. But it's more than that - it can also affect the way people think, speak, perceive things, feel and behave. Dementia makes it harder to communicate and do everyday things, but there is a lot that can be done to help. Every year more is understood about dementia, and new strategies developed that can help to boost someone's confidence and maintain their independence for as long as possible.

4. It's possible to live well with dementia

Most of us have an image in our mind of what life with dementia looks like. That image is often very bleak. So it can be very surprising to learn that many people with dementia continue to drive, socialise and hold down satisfying jobs. Even as dementia progresses, many people lead active, healthy lives, continue their hobbies, and enjoy loving friendships and relationships. Of course dementia does make it harder to do certain things, but with the right knowledge and support it is possible for someone with dementia to get the very best out of life.

5. There's more to a person than the dementia

Life doesn't end when dementia begins. When someone is diagnosed, their plans for the future might change and they may need more help and support to keep doing the things they enjoy - but dementia doesn't change who they are.

