

Information in this leaflet is based on real experiences of a local carer and expert information from the Alzheimer's Society. More information is available on their website at www.alzheimers.org.uk. The National Dementia Helpline is on **0300 222 1122**.

» What is it?

Dementia is the word used to describe a group of symptoms such as a gradual loss of memory:

- difficulties in thinking and planning;
- difficulties with problem solving;
- changes to behaviour and mood;
- loss of skills needed to carry out everyday tasks.

» What causes it?

It's not a natural part of aging. It is caused by a range of disease that affect the brain. The two most common cause are:

- Alzheimer disease;
- Vascular dementia caused by damage to the blood supply to the brain. It can be caused by strokes or reduced blood supply to parts of the brain.

» Is there a cure?

Dementia is a progressive disease. Currently there is no cure. However, there are some drugs and therapies available for people which slow the progress for some people.

» What should I do if I am worried about someone's memory?

It is important that the person who has memory problems is seen by their doctor. It is also important if YOU can go to the doctor with them so you can explain to the doctor the changes that you have seen.

» It's not always dementia!

Problems with memory, mood or thinking are not necessarily caused by dementia. Some of the following may cause similar symptoms:

- Chest and urinary infection, severe constipation;
- Depression;
- Side effects of some drugs;
- Sudden upsets such as a bereavement, or moving home.

» Diagnosing Dementia

There are a number of steps:

- Arrange for the person to see their GP;
- Attend the appointment with them to support them and inform the GP about what you have seen;
- The GP will carry out mental and physical tests including blood tests and will arrange a scan and refer you on to the memory clinic;
- The memory clinic carries out a full mental test;
- All this information will then be passed to a consultant psychiatrist in the memory clinic;
- The Consultants send an invitation to a clinic appointment where they will make a diagnosis and arranges follow-up by the clinic and, if appropriate, start treatment. They may refer to other services. They will also send the results to the GP.

All this information will then be passed to a consultant psychiatrist in the memory clinic.

» Helpful Contacts

| Name | Telephone | Email | Website |
|-------------------------------|---------------|--|--|
| Hartlepool Carers | 01429 283095 | - | www.hartlepoolcarers.org.uk |
| Age UK | 0800 169 6565 | - | www.ageuk.org.uk |
| Alzheimer's Society | 0300 222 1122 | - | www.alzheimers.org.uk www.alzheimers.org.uk/factsheets |
| Talking point discussion form | | - | www.forum.alzheimers.org.uk/forum.php |
| National Dementia Helpline | 0300 222 1122 | - | www.dementiafriends.org.uk |
| Dementia UK | 020 7697 4160 | Info@dementiauk.org | - |
| Hartlepool Central Library | 01429 272905 | Central.library@hartlepool.gov.uk | - |

» Contact us

You can contact the Early Intervention Team by letter, telephone, text, or email. If English is not your first language, we can provide a translation service.

» Our opening times

We open at 8:30am every weekday. We close at 5:00pm from Monday to Thursday. On Fridays we close at 4:30pm.



Telephone: 01429 523390



Text Service: 60006 (start your text with HBC)



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» About this factsheet

This factsheet provides some advice for carers about dementia. We issued this factsheet in August 2014 and updated it in April 2018. We will check the information is up to date in April 2020.



You can download all of our factsheets from
www.hartlepool.gov.uk/factsheetsandpublications