



Dementia

Resources and support to help you live well with dementia

Finding out about dementia

Discovering that you or a loved one may be facing dementia can be a daunting experience. Numerous questions may arise, and the amount of information to absorb can be overwhelming. Fortunately, assistance is at hand. Your doctor (GP) can guide you in understanding what the future may look like and how to access the information and support required for yourself, your family, or your friends.

Help and supports available



Call a national help line

1800 022 222

free call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The National Dementia Helpline is a free telephone service that provides information and advice to:

- People living with dementia
- People concerned about changes to memory and thinking
- People living with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI)
- Family, friends and carers of people living with dementia
- People who work in health and aged care.

Dementia Support Australia:

1800 699 799

24 Hour help

The Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service is a national advisory service for families and carers of people with dementia. The service provides confidential advice, assessment, intervention, education, and specialised support.



Find dementia services using our service directory

You can now find a range of local services in the service directory, such as:

- Information and resources
- Hospital and community services
- In home support
- Support groups and counselling
- Respite services
- Memory clinics
- Health professionals (such as dietitians, exercise physiologists, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, counsellors).





The next steps

STEP 1 | Visit your doctor

Dementia can only be diagnosed with specific medical tests. Your local GP will examine your family and medical history and ask you about changes you or others have noticed. They may also do a physical assessment and test your memory and thinking. Your doctor will likely refer you to run some tests and scans and may include seeing different medical specialists. It can be helpful to have a family member or carer visit the doctor with you.

To Make the most of your doctor visit:

- Book a long appointment so you have time to discuss things in detail.
- Take a list of your medications
- Keep a log of any changes you've noticed
- Ask your Dr about support services to help you live well and information you can take home.



Checklist

- ☐ Consider having someone accompany you to appointments to take notes and ask questions or ask the practitioner to give you some written advice.

Consider:

- What further tests or investigations should I have?
- How long will I have to wait until I have these tests?
- How long will it take to get the results of these tests?

STEP 2 | Working with medical specialists

A Medical Specialist will usually be the person who makes the diagnosis of dementia. Your doctor may refer you to other medical specialists during the different stages of dementia such as neurologists or geriatricians or other allied health professionals. Multiple appointments may be needed before you are given a diagnosis. The specialists will order blood tests and scans and perform physical and memory checks. Your GP will continue to work together with your specialists during this time to ensure you receive the best treatment.



Checklist

- ☐ Learn more about your diagnosis.

This includes:

- The type of dementia you have
- What drug and non-drug treatments are available
- What health professionals might be involved in your care.



STEP 3 | Living well with Dementia

Initial management options once you've been diagnosed with dementia include medications and healthy lifestyle habits.

This includes:

- Doing regular exercise.
- Maintaining a healthy diet.
- Remaining socially engaged and connected.
- Maintaining a healthy weight.
- Managing other health conditions.

Treatment plans may be provided by multidisciplinary care teams who can provide diverse strategies for the treatment of dementia. While treatments options cannot provide a cure for dementia, they can be used to slow the progression and help to reduce the symptoms.



Checklist

- ☐ Organise regular checkups with your help professionals.

Consider:

- What can I do to remain as active and independent as possible?
- What activities will help me maintain fitness, strength, balance, and flexibility?
- What activities can I try to sustain my cognitive function?
- What treatment options are available for me to try?

STEP 4 | Ongoing management and support

There are lots of things you can do to live as well as possible with dementia. Your abilities to perform daily routines and activities might change over time and so an adjustment of your daily routines may be needed. Having regular check-ups with your local doctor (GP) will help to ensure your overall health is being taken care of.

Having a carer assist you with daily tasks such as self-care, home duties and travel will make it easier to live in your home comfortably for longer. Support is also available for your carer to maintain their health and wellbeing while caring for someone with dementia.

As dementia progresses, it is important to discuss your wishes and future care plans with family and friends. These wishes can be formalized in an Advanced Care Plan.



Checklist

- ☐ Make plans for your future.
- ☐ Consider any legal and financial matters, advance care directives, and medical and healthcare wishes.
- ☐ Start to plan for when you may no longer be able to live at home. Research your options and eligibility for residential care.

This might include:

- Having a My Aged Care comprehensive assessment.
- Attending a Dementia Australia information session about residential care .
- Speaking with a dementia counsellor about your feelings and change in circumstances.



Support services

Support services are available to help you and your families. These may include: help around the home, social and daily activities, personal care, respite care, allied health (such as exercise physiologists, dietitians, occupational therapists), transport, and residential aged care.



National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS): If you are under 65 years old contact the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Visit [ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au) or call **1800 800 110**
8.00 am – 8.00 pm, Monday - Friday



My aged care: If you are over 65 years old contact My Aged Care.
Visit myagedcare.gov.au or call **1800 200 422**
8.00 am – 8.00 pm, Monday - Friday



If you are an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander aged 50 – 64 years you can access either NDIS or My Aged Care.

Carers Support

If you're caring for someone with dementia, you can find information, get support and access services in your area and online at [Carer Gateway](https://www.carergateway.gov.au) or call **1800 422 737**.

Information in your language

If you need an interpreter, please call the **Translating and Interpreting Service** on **131 450**.

If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment, please call the **National Relay Service** on **133 677**.

- To access information in other languages **Dementia Australia** provides a wide range of information, education, and support, including information translated into 38 languages.
- **Dementia Support Australia** have a range of translated information online.
- **Moving Pictures** has translated information and short videos available in different languages.

The Dementia Guide

The Dementia Guide is the go-to resource for people living with dementia, their carers and family. You can access the guide print and audio by scanning the QR code.



Scan the QR Code
below for access

