Information for you to download


Dementia the facts: Signs and Symptoms
This factsheet is intended as a guide only, if you are concerned about your memory or any of the other symptoms associated with dementia, you should make an appointment with your GP to discuss.

Worldwide, dementia touches the lives of many people. There are an estimated 800,000 people currently living with dementia in the UK and this figure is set to rise to over a million people with dementia by 2021. Symptoms of dementia are often confused with other things that are seen as a normal part of ageing, such as memory loss, but dementia is not a natural part of the ageing process.

There are a lot of myths, misconceptions and negative stigma surrounding dementia. We aim to provide clear and useful information about dementia to address some of these.

What is Dementia?
Dementia is a syndrome (a group of related symptoms) that is associated with an ongoing decline of the brain and its abilities. These include:

• memory
• thinking
• language
• understanding
• judgement

People with dementia may also become detached from everyday life, have problems controlling their emotions and can find social situations they may have been very used to more difficult and confusing. Aspects of their personality may change or they may see or hear things that other people do not, or have false beliefs. Most cases of dementia are caused by damage to the structure of the brain. People with dementia usually need help from friends or relatives, including help in making decisions.

How common is dementia?
Dementia is a common condition. In the United Kingdom, there are currently 800,000 people living with dementia. That number is expected to double over the next 30 years.

The risk of developing dementia increases with age. One in 14 people over 65 years of age and one in six people over 80 years of age has a form of dementia. There is also a higher risk of developing dementia for certain groups such as people with Down’s syndrome, learning disabilities, Parkinson’s disease or those who have had a stroke.

http://www.northeastlincolnshireccg.nhs.uk/
Types of dementia

Dementia is an umbrella term. It describes the symptoms that occur with various degenerative illnesses of the brain for which there are no cures. There are many different types of dementia although some are more common than others. Some of the more common types are below:

- **Alzheimer's disease** - where small clumps of protein, known as plaques, begin to develop around brain cells. This disrupts the normal workings of the brain. Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia. Symptoms include lapses of memory and having problems finding the right words also mood swings and agitation can also be signs.

- **Vascular dementia** where problems with blood circulation result in parts of the brain not receiving enough blood and oxygen. Vascular dementia is the second most common type of dementia after Alzheimer’s disease. It often follows a 'stepped' progression, with symptoms remaining at a constant level for a time and then suddenly deteriorating. Some symptoms may be similar to those of other types of dementia, such as Alzheimer's disease. Other symptoms include problems with speed of thinking, concentration and communication and some symptoms that may be associated with Stroke such as weakness or paralysis.

- **Dementia with Lewy bodies** is where abnormal structures, known as Lewy bodies, develop inside the brain. This type of dementia shares characteristics with both Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases. It accounts for around ten per cent of all cases of dementia in older people and tends to be under-diagnosed. Symptoms are similar to that of Alzheimer’s disease. Other symptoms can be problems with attention and alertness, spatial disorientation and difficulty with 'executive function', which includes difficulty in planning ahead and co-ordinating mental activity.

- **Frontotemporal dementia** the term ‘frontotemporal dementia’ covers a range of conditions, including Pick’s disease, frontal lobe degeneration, and dementia associated with motor neurone disease. All are caused by damage to the frontal lobe and/or the temporal parts of the brain. These areas are responsible for our behaviour, emotional responses and language skills. Unlike other types of dementia, frontotemporal dementia usually develops in people who are under 65. It is much rarer than other types of dementia.

- **Korsakoff's syndrome** is a brain disorder usually associated with heavy alcohol consumption over a long period. Although Korsakoff's syndrome is not, strictly speaking, a dementia, people with the condition experience loss of short-term memory. Symptoms include difficulty in acquiring new information or learning new skills, change in personality · at one extreme the person may show apathy (lack of concern and/or lack of an emotional reaction), or at the other, talkative and repetitive behaviours.
Worried about your memory?
You should seek help, without delay, if you have concerns about your memory especially if you:
• struggle to remember recent events, although you can easily recall things that happened in the past;
• find it hard to follow conversations or programmes on TV;
• forget the names of friends or everyday objects;
• cannot recall things you have heard, seen or read;
• find it difficult to make decisions;
• notice that you repeat yourself or lose the thread of what you are saying;
• have problems thinking and reasoning;
• feel anxious, depressed or angry about your forgetfulness; and/or
• find that other people start to comment on your forgetfulness.

There are many factors that can cause memory problems, for instance: tiredness, stress, overwork, anxiety, depression, some physical illnesses and / or the side-effects of certain medications. And, of course, some of us have always been more absent minded. However, sometimes forgetfulness can be more than just a natural part of the ageing process, sometimes it can be an early sign of dementia. If memory problems are having an impact on your daily life or of someone you know please contact your GP to discuss.

The Benefits of early Diagnosis
Currently, only 49% of people living with dementia in North East Lincolnshire have had a diagnosis, but an early diagnosis can be very important in ensuring that people are able to maintain the quality of life that they had previously enjoyed and have access to appropriate support and services. Although dementia is incurable, early diagnosis can allow access to medications that can be used to effectively slow down the progression of the illness.

You’re never too young to start thinking about the future
Many people don't think about the legal considerations associated with getting older until it's too late. It's never too early to think about what will happen if you lose the capacity to make decisions for yourself. If you do lose the mental capacity to make your own decisions, and suitable arrangements are not in place, the Court of Protection will appoint someone to be legally responsible for your decision making. Here are some things to think about in relation to Lasting/Enduring Powers of Attorney and Advance Decisions/Living Wills:

Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA) – such an agreement must have been signed before October 2007 and allows a trusted person to act on behalf of a person no longer capable of managing their own finances;

Lasting Powers of Attorney (LPA) – Property and affairs LPA - enables someone you trust (the attorney) to make decisions on your behalf about your property and affairs at a time when you are no longer able or lack the mental capacity to take those decisions yourself. It can only be used once it has been registered at the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG).

http://www.northeastlincolnshireccg.nhs.uk/
**Lasting Powers of Attorney (LPA)** – Personal Welfare LPA - allows the person/s you have chosen as your attorney to make decisions on your behalf about your personal welfare, e.g., where you live. It can include the power for the attorney to give or refuse consent to medical treatment if this power has been expressly given in the LPA.

**Advance Decision/Living Will** – If you are admitted to hospital and require treatment but are unable to give consent, due to unconsciousness of diminished mental capacity, medical professionals will always give the treatment that they feel is in your best interests. An advance decision lets you indicate that you want to refuse certain types of medical treatment in certain situations. It is required that an Advance Decision be respected by the medical professionals providing your care, whether or not they think it’s in your best interests.

**Advance Statement** – Sometimes the term ‘Living Will’ is used to describe an Advance Statement. While Advance Decisions let you refuse certain types of treatment, advance statements cover any other decisions about how you would like to be treated. For example, you could specify your food preferences and your religious and other beliefs. Although only an advance decision is legally binding, an advance statement should be taken into account when meeting your health and care needs.

For more information about Powers of Attorney, please visit the Alzheimer's Society page on Lasting Powers of Attorney.

You can also visit a solicitor who will be able to explain and draw up the legal arrangements discussed above. Costs will vary, but it is usual to pay between £120 - £450 for a Lasting Power of Attorney Agreement.

**Reducing your risks of developing dementia**

It is not clear what causes dementia. It is likely that a mixture of our age, genes, environment, and lifestyle contribute to whether we develop dementia. The risk of developing most dementias increases with age. That means as we get older, we are more likely to develop dementia. Importantly, however, dementia is not a normal part of getting older or an acceleration of ageing.

We can’t change our age and there is currently no way we can completely prevent dementia, but research suggests there may be some simple things we can all do that might help lower our risk of developing dementia.
Risk Factors
A risk factor is anything that can increase your chance of developing dementia. Risk factors for cardiovascular disease (heart disease and stroke) are also risk factors for all types of dementia. So it’s a good idea to keep healthy by:
• exercising regularly - there are a variety of different exercises, such as yoga, that you might find beneficial;
• not smoking;
• achieving and maintaining a healthy weight;
• controlling high blood pressure;
• reducing your cholesterol level;
• controlling your blood glucose if you have diabetes;
• eating a healthy, balanced diet with lots of fruit and vegetables and low amounts of saturated fat;
• encouraging active minds e.g. reading.

How a healthy lifestyle can reduce the risk of developing dementia
Did you know that living a healthy lifestyle may reduce your risk of developing dementia in the same way that it can reduce your risk of having heart disease or a stroke? By keeping your body healthy – especially your heart – you can help to keep your brain healthy too. This is because some forms of dementia are caused by a reduction of blood-flow to the brain. Here are some useful tips:

Eat healthily
Eat lots of fruit and vegetables and try to limit the number of high-fat, sugary and salty foods you eat. Drink alcohol in moderation.

Get active and stay active on a daily basis
Over a week, you should be doing at least 150 minutes (2½ hours) of moderate intensity activity in bouts of 10 minutes or more – For instance you could do 30 minutes of activity at least 5 days a week. Such activities could include going on daily walks or visiting your local gym.

Watch your blood pressure and cholesterol
ask your GP to check your blood pressure and cholesterol regularly. A healthy diet and regular exercise can help keep you within healthy limits.

Keep a healthy weight
Nearly a quarter of all adults in the UK are obese. Obesity is linked to the development of dementia so it’s important to keep in shape.

Stop smoking
smoking has an extremely harmful effect on the heart, lungs and blood system (including the blood system in the brain). To find your local stop smoking service call 0800 085 2917 or text LIFE to 80800.

The above Information is taken from the Alzheimer's Society leaflet: Be head strong: A guide to help you reduce your risk of developing dementia (pdf, 324kb)

http://www.northeastlincolnshireccg.nhs.uk/
Research, Misunderstandings and Myths
Some studies suggest that enjoying an active life, with lots of interests and hobbies might be beneficial. Other researchers have found that spending more time in education is associated with a lower risk.

It’s not yet known whether eating oily fish or taking B vitamins can reduce the risk of dementia as studies so far have had mixed results. It is not advised to take NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs like aspirin or ibuprofen) or HRT (hormone replacement therapy) to protect against dementia, as research is continuing in this area. You should talk to your doctor before taking any supplements or drugs that claim to prevent dementia, as most are unproven and they can have serious side effects.

You might read or hear about other risk factors for dementia. Despite occasional publicity, research has shown that meat, aluminium or living close to power lines are not risk factors for dementia. There is also no evidence that turmeric, gingko, ginseng, statins or coffee can protect against dementia.

Information for People who have had a diagnosis of dementia
It is quite common for people to experience a number of emotions following a diagnosis of dementia:

• You may find receiving a diagnosis will come as a shock.
• You may have noticed that things weren’t quite right for some time and now there are a lot of things to take on board, which can feel overwhelming.
• You may feel relieved that you now have some answers and can start to make plans.
• You may have questions that are unanswered.
• You may be confused about what will happen next, where you can go to for support and what will happen when you get there.
• You may feel like dementia is a death sentence but, although the various conditions associated are incurable, a diagnosis of dementia does not necessarily mean the end of your life.

If any of this relates to you, this site can help you to start to answer some of those questions and also direct you to local and national sources of information and support.

The first, and most important, thing to remember is that you are not alone and there is a great deal that you can do to live a happy and fulfilling life after a dementia diagnosis.

In the near future, we will include more information designed especially for people living with dementia, with interactive suggestions of things you can do. We hope that it will act as a useful resource to help you to stay independent, inspire you to keep active and enjoy life. We also hope it will support you in coming to terms with the changes ahead, preparing you with coping strategies to deal with the changes so that you can ‘live well with dementia’.

In the meantime, we have asked experts in the field of dementia, carers and people with dementia, to suggest 10 things that might be useful to consider following your diagnosis:

http://www.northeastlincolnshireccg.nhs.uk/
1. Gather information about your diagnosis
As soon as you feel ready, find out about what to expect and where you can get further information. The Alzheimer’s Society is a great start – www.alzheimers.org.uk. You can also visit your local library for specially selected books about dementia.

Dementia Books on Prescription
A number of books are available for anyone to browse or borrow from local libraries across North East Lincolnshire to enhance understanding of dementia and to support people to live well with dementia. The books are generally aimed at supporting people with an early diagnosis, or in the early stages of dementia. If your library does not have the book(s), they can get it from another library for you. This is the list of recommended titles;
A book that you may find useful is ‘Early Stage Dementia: Reassurance for Sufferers and Carers’ by Lorraine West, published by Newleaf.

I INSERT BOOKS HERE & LIBRARY INFORMATION

2. Get support locally in your community
Please remember that you are not alone and it is important to stay connected with others. North East Lincolnshire have a number of dementia support groups and dementia cafes where people meet to socialise and also gain support, information and tips for living well with dementia. There is also a national forum for connecting with others online.

3. Look after your physical health
Try to stay physically active, eat a healthy balanced diet, take any medication that you have been prescribed and get plenty of sleep. Below is a picture guide on the types of foods you should think about eating every day:

4. Always see your doctor if you have any concerns
Improved blood circulation in the brain resulting from a healthy heart can have a positive impact on symptoms and the progression of the disease. This is particularly true of vascular dementia, which is associated with a reduction in blood flow to the brain. Regular exercise is particularly important because it helps to keep you physically healthy, protecting you from illness and disease. It can help people to stay mobile and independent for as long as possible, helping to protect against falls by strengthening muscles and aiding flexibility. It can also reduce stress, improve mood, increase confidence and help you to stay connected with others. Simple exercises such as a short walk on a set route, or join local opportunities to be physically active or details on local health walk schemes.

http://www.northeastlincolnshireccg.nhs.uk/
8. Use ideas and tips to help you with everyday tasks
Taking the time now to try new tips and strategies, such as simple memory aids, can help you to stay independent for as long as possible. The Alzheimer's society has useful ideas under its ‘Living with Dementia’ section. A book that you may also find useful is ‘Early Stage Dementia: Reassurance for Sufferers and Carers’ by Lorraine West, published by Newleaf.

9. Take steps to stay safe
You may have concerns about staying safe in the future for example questions about driving, accommodation or safety in the home. There is much support in the community from care services and also support groups to help you think about making plans for the future.

10. Learn, experience and connect
Do activities and hobbies that you enjoy. The pages in this website under the heading [insert link] provide information about a host of activities and groups that you could join. You might try dancing, walking groups, swimming, painting, gardening, singing or music groups. All are great ways to boost overall well-being. We are working hard to ensure that people with dementia feel welcomed and understood throughout our communities, so that you do not feel you have to cut yourself off from others due to fear or stigma.

11. Expect to have good and bad days
Remember you are not alone, support is available to you, and there is a lot you can do to live a happy and positive life with dementia.

Dementia Cafes
Dementia Cafes - Can provide a supportive environment both for you and the person supporting you. You can find out more about Dementia Cafe's by visiting the Alzheimer's Society Website or downloading the below leaflet:

Alzheimers to supply updated info re dementia cafe’s downloadable leaflet

will need logos on etc and making into a pdf Keep active to stay active leaflet produced by Irene careplus , Irene.Grainger@nhs.net

http://www.northeastlincolnshireccg.nhs.uk/
KEEP ACTIVE TO STAY ACTIVE

Our bodies start to slow down as we get older…that doesn’t mean we have to! Staying active is extremely important, especially if you are living with dementia.

Staying active doesn’t just mean going to an exercise class. It can be looking after yourself or your home. You may not realise how important getting washed and dressed without help is. Choosing clothes appropriate for the right activity, and organising your day is a great brain exercise. Have you realised your home is a gym? Carrying wet washing, and pegging it outside is great for strength, balance, and for keeping dizziness at bay. Cleaning and vacuuming are both great for stamina, strength and balance….not to mention a staircase if you have one!

It’s important to stay active to keep active.
North East Lincolnshire are currently taking part in a project to identify early problems with cognition – see PR write up about this to insert contact Sarah Howells shooting star-

Account Manager

01522 528 540 | 07738 355 316
sarah@shootingstar-pr.co.uk
www.shootingstar-pr.co.uk
@sarahhowellspr | @shootingstarpr

http://www.northeastlincolnshireccg.nhs.uk/