

Check-ups

It is worth arranging check-ups with the GP, as well as sight, hearing and dental checks, as soon as possible after the diagnosis of dementia. At this stage, many people are still able to give information about themselves and find it easier to adjust to any changes, such as using a different hearing aid. Also, later check-ups will be easier if the professional has been able to establish a relationship with the person at an early stage of their dementia.

If there's an area of particular concern, such as diabetes, make sure the person has regular check-ups.

It is recommended that people with dementia and their carers have a seasonal flu vaccination. Most GP surgeries organise vaccination sessions in the autumn. People over 65 and people with dementia are considered 'at risk', so they are entitled to a free flu jab.

Medication

In general, the fewer drugs someone with dementia has to take, the better - both for their dementia and their general health. This includes prescription and over-the-counter drugs. If you are supporting someone with dementia, you may find the following tips useful.

- As soon as possible after diagnosis, check with the GP to make sure that the person is not taking any drugs that they don't need any more, and that they are taking the lowest possible effective dose of those they do.
- If any drugs are used to relieve behavioural symptoms, make sure these are reviewed very regularly.
- If you suspect that the person's medication may be increasing their confusion or causing other unwanted side-effects, tell the GP.

- Help the person take their medication at the right time by using box compartments or individual tablets marked with days or times. For more severe memory problems, you may need to make sure that the person doesn't overlook a dose or take an extra dose by mistake. You might even need to place medicines out of reach and out of sight as an extra precaution.
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