



What is dementia?



Easy Read factsheet



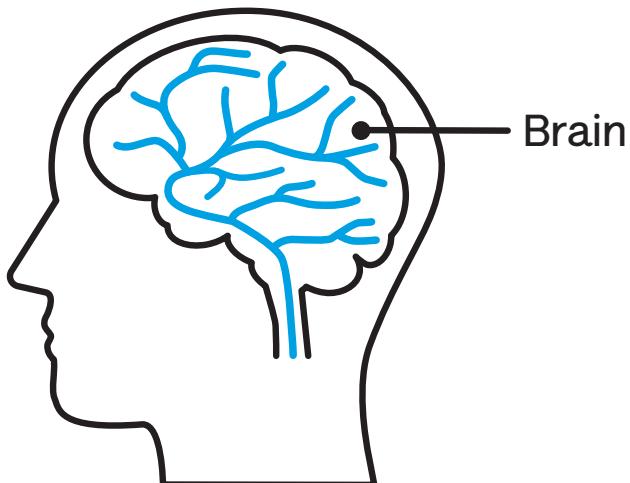
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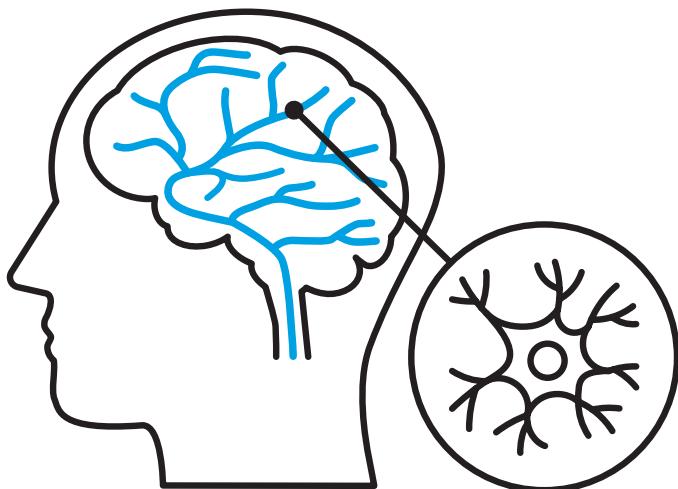
This factsheet is about what dementia is and how it affects people. It is written for people with learning disabilities. For more information about supporting someone with dementia, see Easy Read factsheet ER2, **Helping a person with dementia**.

Alzheimer's Society worked with the Belfast Dementia Champions with learning disabilities group to produce this factsheet. Alzheimer's Society wishes to thank the group for their contributions.

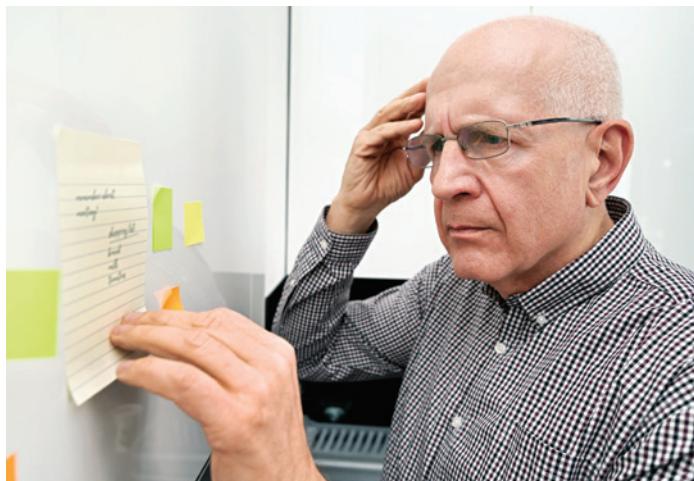
What is dementia?



Dementia is an illness caused by damage to a person's brain.



Cells in the brain die.
They cannot grow again.



Damage to the person's brain makes it hard to remember,
think and do things.

Who can get dementia?



Older people over 65 are more likely to get dementia.



People with learning disabilities are more likely to get dementia.



People with learning disabilities are more likely to get dementia when they are younger.

How does dementia affect people?



Dementia might make a person forget names or where they have put things.



A person with dementia might find it hard to speak the right words or understand what someone else is saying.



Dementia can change how people feel and behave. They may be sad or angry or confused.



A person with dementia can find it hard to do everyday things, like cooking.

How can doctors tell if someone has dementia?



When someone has problems remembering, thinking or doing things they should see their doctor.



The doctor will ask the person questions.



The person might have a blood test.



The person may need to do more tests to see how they remember, think and do things.



The person might have a brain scan. This helps the doctors to see how the brain is working.

Can someone get better from dementia?



A person cannot get better from dementia.

Things will get more difficult for them over time.

The person will die earlier.



But the person can still enjoy life, and do lots of things.



Talking with other people and doing things in a group might help the person to enjoy life.



Medicines can help the person to keep doing everyday things for longer.



Medicine can help a person with dementia to remember things better.



Scientists are trying to find new treatments and a cure.

Can someone stop themselves from getting dementia?



A person cannot stop themselves from getting dementia.

Most people do not get dementia.



There are some things that might help someone, like doing things they enjoy and exercising.



Not smoking.



Not drinking too much alcohol.



Eating healthy food.



Seeing family and friends often.

Where can I find more information about dementia?



For more information and advice, visit Alzheimer's Society's website [alzheimers.org.uk](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk)



Phone Alzheimer's Society to talk to someone about dementia on **0333 150 3456**



See our Easy Read factsheet ER2, **Helping a person with dementia** for more information.

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Next review due: January 2023



**Information
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Our information is based on evidence and need, and is regularly updated using thorough quality-control processes. It is reviewed by experts in health and social care and people affected by dementia.

Alzheimer's Society is the UK's leading support and research charity for people with dementia, their families and carers.

If you have any concerns about Alzheimer's disease or any other form of dementia, visit alzheimers.org.uk or call **Alzheimer's Society** on **0333 150 3456**. (Interpreters are available in any language. Calls may be recorded or monitored for training and evaluation purposes.)

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Alzheimer's Society operates in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.