

Sign 9 Loss of initiative

It is normal to lose interest in housework, business activities or social obligations sometimes. But most people regain their initiative. A person with dementia may become passive and disinterested. They may need cues and prompts to become involved.

Sign 10 Challenges understanding visual and spatial information

A person with dementia may have problems with vision, depth perception and movement. They might not see objects in their way when walking. Or they might have challenges placing items on a table.



The Alzheimer Society is Canada's leading nationwide health charity for people living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Active in communities across Canada, the Society:

- Offers information, support and education programs for people with dementia, their families and caregivers
- Funds research to find a cure and improve the care of people with dementia
- Promotes public education and awareness of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias to ensure people know where to turn for help
- Influences policy and decision-making to address the needs of people with dementia and their caregivers.

For more information, contact your local Alzheimer Society or visit our website at alzheimer.ca.

Help for Today. Hope for Tomorrow...®

Created: 1998 Last reviewed: 2023. Next review due: 2028.
© Alzheimer Society of Canada, 2023. All rights reserved.

We thank the Care of the Elderly Member Interest Group for their generous contribution to the development of this resource.

Alzheimer Society


Alzheimer Society of Canada
20 Eglinton Avenue West, 16th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M4R 1K8

National Office: 1-800-616-8816

Information and Referrals: 1-855-705-4636 (INFO)

 info@alzheimer.ca  alzheimer.ca

 [@AlzheimerCanada](https://www.facebook.com/AlzheimerCanada)  [@AlzCanada](https://twitter.com/AlzCanada)

 [@AlzheimerCanada](https://www.instagram.com/AlzheimerCanada)

Charitable registration number: 11878 4925 RR0001

Dementia

10 warning signs



Dementia is an overall term that describes a set of symptoms caused by conditions or diseases affecting the brain. Symptoms may be different for each person, but may include changes in memory, mood, personality and behaviour and difficulties with thinking, problem solving and communication. While these changes may seem small, they can affect the day-to-day lives of people living with dementia. Symptoms may also be due to other conditions such as depression, drug interactions or an infection.

It is important to see a doctor to receive a diagnosis and proper treatment. While Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia, there are many other types, such as Lewy body dementia, frontotemporal dementia and vascular dementia.

If you are concerned that you or someone you care about has dementia, contact the Alzheimer Society for information, support and education.



10 warning signs

Sign 1 Memory changes that affect day-to-day abilities

It is normal to sometimes forget meetings or co-worker names only to remember them a short time later. But a person with dementia may forget things more often. Or it might be hard for them to remember information they just learned.

Sign 2 Difficulty doing familiar tasks

Busy people can be so distracted sometimes that they may forget to serve part of a meal, only to remember it later. But a person living with dementia may have trouble doing tasks they have done all their lives, such as preparing a meal or playing a game.

Sign 3 Changes in language and communication

Anyone can have trouble finding the right word. But a person with dementia may forget simple words. Or they may use the wrong words, making that person hard to understand.

Sign 4 Disorientation in time and space

It is common to forget the day of the week or your destination — for a moment. But a person with dementia may become lost on their own street. They may not know how they got there or how to get home.

Sign 5 Impaired judgment

Sometimes, people may make bad decisions such as putting off seeing a doctor when they are not feeling well. But a person with dementia may not recognize a medical problem that needs attention, or wear heavy clothing on a hot day.

Sign 6 Problems with abstract thinking

Sometimes, people may have difficulty with tasks that require abstract thinking, such as managing finances. But a person with dementia may experience challenges with understanding what numbers are and how they are used.

Sign 7 Misplacing things

Anyone can temporarily misplace a wallet or keys. But a person with dementia may put things in inappropriate places, such as an iron in the freezer or a wristwatch in the sugar bowl.

Sign 8 Changes in mood, personality and behaviour

Sometimes people feel sad and moody, or experience changes in their behaviour. But a person living with dementia may experience more severe changes. For example, they may quickly become tearful or upset for no obvious reason. They may be confused or suspicious and withdraw from others. They may act differently from what is normal for them.