



Radfield Home Care  
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## Dementia Factsheet

### What is Dementia?

Dementia currently affects around 800,000 people in the UK, and those over the age of 65 are at a greater risk of developing the condition. Dementia is an umbrella term and describes symptoms that occur when the brain is damaged by conditions, such as Alzheimer's disease or a series of strokes. All forms of dementia are progressive, which means the structure and chemistry of the brain becomes increasingly damaged over time, so an individual's ability to remember, communicate, reason and understand gradually declines. It's important to remember everyone experiences dementia differently, and a number of factors such as physical make-up, emotional resilience, and the support available can slow down the symptoms.

### Symptoms and Diagnosis

Dementia is a syndrome associated with the ongoing decline of the brain and its abilities. The condition often affects memory, thinking speed, mental agility, judgement and language, and symptoms can include:

- ❖ Increasing difficulties with tasks and activities that require concentration and planning
- ❖ Depression
- ❖ Changes in personality and mood
- ❖ Periods of mental confusion
- ❖ Difficulty finding the right words

However, it's normal for an individual's memory to decline with age, tiredness, medication, and stress, so diagnosing dementia can often be difficult, especially as some of the symptoms are associated with other conditions. A GP is the first person to consult and they will typically refer you onto a specialist consultant who will run a number of tests to determine the condition. An early diagnosis can help people with dementia get the right treatment and support they need, and help those close to them to prepare and plan for the future. It's also important to know who will



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be responsible for managing your care in the short and long term, and who you can contact if you have any queries.

### Treatment

There are currently no drug treatments to cure dementia, but there is medication available that can help with the symptoms and slow down their progression, however not everyone will benefit from these forms of medication. Psychological treatment has also been shown to help, although it doesn't slow down the effects of the condition, it can help an individual learn to deal with the symptoms.

Perhaps the most important treatment for those with dementia is support and care. A dementia diagnosis can come as a huge shock and it's natural to worry about the future, but the support available in the UK is first class.

### Living with Dementia

Many individuals can continue to stay in their own homes with support from family, community nurses and private care workers, and being in a familiar surrounding can often help them cope with their condition. The progressive nature of dementia means it will change over time, and the care and support available at the beginning may no longer be appropriate. It is therefore important to be aware of the range of local services that can help you and members of your family, not to mention social services that can help with personal care, day-to-day activities and medication support. There are also 240 support groups across the UK that can provide emotional comfort.

Members of the public aren't always aware of the symptoms of dementia, which is why the Dementia Friends campaign has been launched which aims to educate people about dementia and also identify the common misconceptions. The initiative hopes to enable local communities to understand what dementia is and how it might affect them. Dementia Friends aims to make everyday life better for people with dementia by changing the way the nation thinks, talks and acts.

For more information visit:

[Alzheimer's UK](#)

[Dementia.org](#)

[NHS](#)



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