



Dementia Overview: Types, Pharmacological, and Non-Pharmacological Management (Symptom-Focused)

This chart provides a general guide to common dementia types and management approaches. Treatment plans are highly individualized and aim to improve quality of life and manage symptoms, not cure the underlying disease. Always consult a healthcare professional.

1. Common Dementia Types & What to Expect (What's Happening in the Brain)



Alzheimer's Disease (AD)



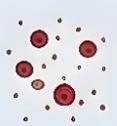
Most common type. Gradual memory loss, confusion, trouble with daily tasks. Caused by protein build-up (plaques & tangles) damaging brain cells.

Vascular Dementia (VaD)



Due to reduced blood flow to the brain, often after strokes. Changes can be sudden or step-like, affecting planning, planning, organizing, and decision-making more than memory initially.

Lewy Body Dementia (LBD)



Changes in thinking can vary day-to-day. May see things that aren't there (visual hallucinations) and have movement stiffness or tremors, similar to Parkinson's. Caused by abnormal protein deposits.

Frontotemporal Dementia (FTD)



Often starts at a younger age. Affects personality, behavior, and language skills more than memory. Caused by damage to the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain.

2. Medications to Help Manage Symptoms (Not a Cure)



Cholinesterase Inhibitors



Donepezil Rivastigmine Galantamine
Boosts a chemical messenger for memory and thinking. Used for AD, LBD, and sometimes VaD. Can temporarily improve thinking and daily function. Common side effects: upset stomach, nausea.

Memantine (NMDA Antagonist)



Regulates another brain chemical to help with learning and memory. **Memantine** For moderate-to-severe AD, often taken with other meds. Common side effects: dizziness, headache, confusion.

Other Symptom-Specific Meds



Antidepressants Antipsychotics
Used for mood changes like depression, anxiety, sleep problems, or severe agitation. (CAUTION: Antipsychotics have serious risks, especially in LBD, and are used carefully). Highly individualized.

3. Non-Drug Approaches for Better Quality of Life



Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST)



Engaging in structured group activities like puzzles, word games, and discussions to keep the mind active and improve well-being.

Physical Activity & Exercise



Regular, tailored movement like walking, gardening, or chair exercises to boost mood, heart health, and physical strength.

Social Engagement & Meaningful Activities



Staying connected with others and doing things you enjoy, like hobbies, music, or volunteering, to reduce loneliness and improve mood.

Behavioral & Environmental Strategies



Making the home safer (e.g., good lighting, removing clutter), simplifying routines, and using calm communication to reduce stress and confusion.

Caregiver Support & Education



Essential help for family and friends providing care. Includes training on dementia, respite care (breaks), and support groups for emotional well-being.



IMPORTANT NOTE ON MANAGEMENT:

These treatments do NOT stop the disease from progressing but aim to manage symptoms and improve daily life. Effectiveness varies for everyone. Regular check-ins with a specialist are vital to adjust the care plan.