



'Try and live a normal life if you have dementia'

19 hours ago

Share  Save 

Andrea Ormsby
BBC News, Devon



Mary lives at home and says she would not be happy to move in to "an old folks' home"

A woman diagnosed with dementia in 2016 is still living an independent life at home nine years on.

Mary, 86, said it was "very important" for her to stay in her own home and she believed staying busy and sticking to a routine helped her.

She has three visits a day from carers, who stay for about an hour each time.

Her advice to other people diagnosed with the condition was to "try not to worry about it, try and lead a normal life, and hope for the best".

ADVERTISEMENT



Replay

Staying active

Mary was born in Devon but for many years lived abroad with her husband in Bogata, Madrid and Mexico City.

Back in Devon, Mary said she could not remember how her dementia diagnosis came about.

"I didn't suddenly say: 'Oh, God. I've got dementia' because it wasn't like that."

She said she believed staying active was crucial and she went to a community support group once a week where she did yoga and craft work.

Mary has recently been to Tenerife where she went whale-watching, enjoyed karaoke evenings and flamenco shows, which she describes as "amazing and quite incredible".



Mary keeps a diary of events every day to help her remember her plans

Mary has three carer visits a day to help her with medication, cooking and shopping.

Holly Willis, from care provider Home Instead, said that, when the company first started caring for Mary, she was quite confused but, in the last nine years, "she's almost got better".

Ms Willis added: "I think it gives other people hope because it doesn't just mean a steep decline when you have a diagnosis."

Mary said she was grateful to her carers because they made it possible for her to stay at home.

She said: "I like it very much to be in my own home. I would not be happy to move in to an old folks' home or anything."

She added that she kept a diary of events every day which her carers said helped her to remember her busy schedule.

*Follow BBC Devon on [**X**](#), [**Facebook**](#) and [**Instagram**](#). Send your story ideas to [**spotlight@bbc.co.uk**](mailto:spotlight@bbc.co.uk).*

**Can old TV shows unlock memories in those living with dementia?
What is Alzheimer's and how common is it?**