



Family
Caregiver
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5 Facts About Dementia

Many people think dementia is a disease, but the term actually refers to a group of symptoms. Like all symptoms, dementia points to a disease or disorder that must be diagnosed to determine appropriate treatment and care. Here are five facts that describe what dementia is and what it means.



Symptoms relate to cognition.

Symptoms of dementia include short-term memory loss, confusion, inability to problem solve or complete multi-step activities, personality changes, and unusual behavior.

A clear diagnosis is important.

Medication interactions, endocrine abnormalities, metabolic disturbances, emotional distress, poor vision or hearing, infections, or nutritional deficiencies may look like dementia.



Degenerative dementias are irreversible. Alzheimer's disease is the most common irreversible dementia, but there are many possible causes. For appropriate treatment and care, get an accurate diagnosis.

Treatment focuses on quality of life.

There's no cure for degenerative dementia, so medical treatments seek to maximize cognitive and functional ability, and temporarily improve symptoms.



Diagnosis determines next steps.

Once a diagnosis is reached, families can begin their education, secure appropriate resources, and learn to handle shifting care needs.

Want to Learn More? Find more tips and caregiver resources in our **Dementia: Is This Dementia and What Does It Mean?** fact sheet at caregiver.org/resource/is-this-dementia-what-does-it-mean.

