



You may have heard the terms '**dementia**' or '**Alzheimer's disease**.' You may be wondering, "what exactly do those terms mean?", "what is the difference?" or "what causes them?"

TYPES OF DEMENTIA

Dementia is an umbrella term for a group of brain conditions. These conditions cause changes in the brain which lead a wide range of symptoms. Symptoms can include changes in memory, thinking, behaviour and perceptions. These changes are caused by damage to the brain. Brain damage can affect a person's ability to perform daily activities.

There are many types of dementia. Alzheimer's disease is the most common. More than 50% of people with Alzheimer's disease have another type of dementia at the same time. This is called Mixed Dementia.

To read more about the types of dementia: [Click Here](#)

Genetics

There are two forms of Alzheimer's disease: **Familial** and **Sporadic**.

Familial:

- This type is hereditary. This means Alzheimer's disease can be passed from a parent to their child.
- Familial Alzheimer's disease usually occurs at younger ages.
- Fewer than 5% of all Alzheimer's cases are familial.

Sporadic:

- Sporadic Alzheimer's disease has no specific genetic link. It is not hereditary.
- Most cases of Alzheimer's disease are sporadic.

- Many factors make it more likely for someone to develop sporadic Alzheimer’s disease. For example,
 - The most common risk of developing Alzheimer’s disease is age. But keep in mind, Alzheimer’s is not consequence of normal aging.
 - Other factors include smoking, obesity, and lack of exercise.

To learn more about the science of dementia: [Click Here](#)

Learn about reducing the risk of dementia: [Click Here](#)

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease will get worse over time. New symptoms will appear as the disease spreads in the brain.

The symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease can differ between people. The first symptom is usually memory loss for recent events. The person may have trouble remembering new information.

Other common symptoms are:

- Difficulty planning or reasoning
- Language problems
- Apathy and loss of motivation
- Challenges recognizing objects
- Poor sense of direction
- Changes in social skills, personality, and/or mood

A person with Alzheimer’s disease may or may not be aware of changes in their abilities. Reminding them of their symptoms can be upsetting. When someone has symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease, try not to correct or blame them.

Understanding symptoms can be a key to coping. To learn more about behaviour changes and how to connect with the person, [Click Here](#)

DIAGNOSIS

The doctor must first rule out other causes of symptoms. There is no single test to detect Alzheimer’s disease. Instead, experts use a combination of tests. This can include tests of mental abilities and brain scans. Tests of mental abilities can show symptoms and their severity. Brain scans can show the location of brain damage.

Getting a diagnosis can take time. It is best to express concerns to a doctor early so that they can track changes in symptoms.

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- Reach out to the Dementia Society - No One Should Face Dementia Alone™ <https://dementiahelp.ca/>
- Sign up for the Dementia Basics workshop: <https://dementiahelp.ca/programs-services/ottawa-programs/>
- Connect with a Dementia Care Coach: <https://dementiahelp.ca/programs-services/dementia-care-coach/>
- Learn more about dementia and caregiving through online webinars: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqiA3A3X-xLlqa8QwqUFCxgLTLr1hLG53>

Ottawa: 613-523-4004 **Renfrew-County:** 1-888-411-2067 | info@dsorc.org | DementiaHelp.ca

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