



Dementia is a set of symptoms that can include changes in memory, judgment, and reasoning. Symptoms can also include changes in mood or behavior. These symptoms can make it difficult to do daily tasks. Finding out the cause of the symptoms can help people:

- Understand the changes
- Get the proper care and treatment
- Access advice, information, and support
- Plan for the future

If you have noticed symptoms, you might be wondering:

How to start a conversation about diagnosing dementia

Sometimes the person experiencing symptoms will suggest a check-up. For others, they may not like the idea of visiting a doctor. This might be because:

- Dementia is interfering with their ability to notice their own symptoms.
- They may be afraid of having their symptoms confirmed.

Here are some tips to help set up the appointment:

- Suggest getting their heart, blood pressure or medication checked.
- Suggest that it is time for both of you to have a check-up.

If the person refuses a check-up and their symptoms are becoming severe:

- Consider contacting a Geriatric Assessment Outreach Team in your area. Read about their services [Here](#).
- Contact the Champlain Local Health Integration Network and ask for in-home support. Read about their services [Here](#).
- Talk about strategies or community options with a Dementia Care Coach: [Click Here](#).

How is a diagnosis of dementia made?

1. A doctor does a physical examination, orders tests, and asks questions. These questions test thinking and memory.
2. The doctor may refer the person to a specialist to help make the diagnosis. You can also ask for a referral to a memory clinic or other specialist for a second opinion.
3. The referral may be made to another expert in the area. E.g., a psychologist, neurologist, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapist.



Ways to help start the assessment

- Offer to make the appointment for the person.
- Let the doctor know if the person is reluctant to get a check-up.
- Offer to drive them to the appointment.
- Offer to go to appointments and tests together.
- Share information with other family members or caregivers.
- Write down the symptoms and their history ahead of time. You can share this information at the first appointment.
- Be supportive. This can be scary for the person.
- Talk with others who have gone through similar events. Join support groups for care partners in the Ottawa and Renfrew area: [Click Here](#)

How long does it take to get a diagnosis?

Making a diagnosis of dementia can take time. Here are some important points to consider:

- A thorough assessment will first be done to rule out other possible illnesses.
- Changes might be tracked over time before any conclusions can be made.
- If scans and other tests are needed, these can take time depending on waiting lists.

What are the supports in my area?

The dementia society is here to help. No diagnosis is needed. We can:

- Provide strategies for keeping your brain healthy
- Help you navigate the health care system
- Answer your questions about dementia and send you information
- Connect you with others who are facing similar situations
- Connect you with dementia friendly activities in the area
- For more information, visit: <https://dementiahelp.ca/>

For other geriatric services in the Ottawa area, visit: <https://www.rgpeo.com/services/other-specialized-geriatric-services-in-ottawa-and-the-champlain-region/>

You can learn more about dementia by:

- Signing up for education live sessions: <https://dementiahelp.ca/programs-services/ottawa-programs/>
- Watching webinars on topics related to dementia and caregiving: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqiA3A3X-xLlqa8QwqUFCxgLTlR1hLG53>
- Reading more here: <https://dementiahelp.ca/understanding-dementia/resources-factsheets/>

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

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