



The
**Dementia
Society**
Ottawa and Renfrew County

YOUNG ONSET DEMENTIA



After receiving a diagnosis of Young Onset Dementia, you may be wondering:

WHAT IS YOUNG ONSET DEMENTIA?

Dementia is an umbrella term for a group of brain conditions. These conditions cause changes in the brain leading to a wide range of symptoms. These symptoms can affect a person's ability to do daily activities. Dementia is progressive, which means symptoms will get worse over time.

Dementia rarely occurs in young people. When dementia symptoms occur before age 65, it is called **Young Onset Dementia**. Many diseases can cause Young Onset Dementia. About 1/3 of people diagnosed with Young Onset Dementia have Alzheimer's Disease. Vascular Dementia and Frontotemporal Dementia can also occur before age 65.

To learn about the different types of dementia: [Click Here](#)

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

IS YOUNG ONSET DEMENTIA GENETIC?

Compared to other types of dementia, Young Onset Dementia is more likely to be hereditary. This means it can be genetically passed down from a parent to their child. Yet, the majority of Young Onset Dementia cases are not hereditary. Other lifestyle factors increase the risk of developing dementia.

- To learn about risk factors, read the Living Well for Brain Health fact sheet, available [Here](#).

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Changes in personality and behaviour are common symptoms of Young Onset Dementia. Family and friends are usually the first to notice changes. A person may struggle at work or make mistakes in daily tasks. Symptoms can include:

- Trouble planning or problem-solving
- Misplacing items
- Withdraw from regular activities
- Confusion with time or place
- Poor judgement
- Memory loss

Young Onset Dementia can affect self-esteem and a person's sense of purpose. It is important to seek support after a diagnosis:

- **Living with Dementia education sessions.** Register for these information sessions designed to support people in the early stages of their diagnosis. Sessions are an opportunity to meet others with similar diagnoses. Participants can join a support group for people with Young Onset Dementia. Contact the Dementia Society for more information. *No One Should Face Dementia Alone™*: <https://dementiahelp.ca/about-us/contact-us/>

HOW IS YOUNG ONSET DEMENTIA DIAGNOSED?

Diagnosis often takes longer for a younger person. When the person is young, they may be otherwise healthy and strong. The doctor must rule out other possible causes of symptoms. Sometimes, the person is first diagnosed with depression, anxiety, or stress. The doctor may refer the person to specialists for tests. There is no single test to detect Young Onset Dementia. Instead, experts use a combination of tests. These includes 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.

It is important to diagnose the right type of dementia. Some medicines may help one type but have harmful effects for another. Getting a diagnosis can take time. Reports from close friends and family can help the experts arrive at a diagnosis. It is best to express concerns to a doctor early to track changes in symptoms.

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- Connect with a Dementia Care Coach: <https://dementiahelp.ca/programs-services/dementia-care-coach/>
- Sign up for the Dementia Basics workshop: <https://dementiahelp.ca/programs-services/ottawa-programs/>
- Learn more about Young Onset Dementia: <https://dementiahelp.ca/young-onset-dementia-a-talk-in-ottawa/>

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