

A monthly newsletter brought to you by Dementia Friendly Wyoming

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10 Early Symptoms of Dementia

Dementia is a collection of symptoms that can occur due to a variety of possible diseases. Dementia symptoms include impairments in thought, communication, and memory.

Symptoms of dementia

If you or your loved one is experiencing memory problems, don't immediately conclude that it's dementia. A person needs to have at least two types of impairment that significantly interfere with everyday life to receive a dementia diagnosis. In addition to difficulty remembering, the person may also experience impairments in language, communication, focus and reasoning.

- 1. Subtle short-term memory changes-** Trouble with memory can be an early symptom of dementia. The changes are often subtle and tend to involve short-term memory. An older person may be able to remember events that took place years ago but not what they had for breakfast. Other symptoms of changes in short-term memory include forgetting where they left an item, struggling to remember why they entered a particular room, or forgetting what they were supposed to do on any given day.
- 2. Difficulty finding the right words-** Another early symptom of dementia is struggling to communicate thoughts. A person with dementia may have difficulty explaining something or finding the right words to express themselves. Having a conversation with a person who has dementia can be difficult, and it may take longer than usual to conclude.
- 3. Changes in mood** - A change in mood is also common with dementia. If you have dementia, it isn't always easy to recognize this in yourself, but you may notice this change in someone else. Depression, for instance, is typical of early dementia. Along with mood changes, you might also see a shift in personality. One typical type of personality change seen with dementia is a shift from being shy to outgoing. This is because the condition often affects judgment.
- 4. Apathy** - Apathy, or listlessness, commonly occurs in early dementia. A person with symptoms could lose interest in hobbies or activities. They may not want to go out anymore or do anything fun. They may lose interest in spending time with friends and family, and they may seem emotionally flat.
- 5. Difficulty completing normal tasks** - A subtle shift in the ability to complete normal tasks may indicate that someone has early dementia. This usually starts with difficulty doing more complex tasks like balancing a checkbook or playing games that have a lot of rules. Along with the struggle to complete familiar tasks, they may struggle to learn how to do new things or follow new routines.

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6. Confusion - Someone in the early stages of dementia may often become confused. When memory, thinking, or judgment lapses, confusion may arise as they can no longer remember faces, find the right words, or interact with people normally. Confusion can occur for a number of reasons and apply to different situations. For example, they may misplace their car keys, forget what comes next in the day, or have difficulty remembering someone they've met before.

7. Difficulty following storylines - Difficulty following storylines may occur due to early dementia. This is a classic early symptom. Just as finding and using the right words becomes difficult, people with dementia sometimes forget the meanings of words they hear or struggle to follow along with conversations or TV programs.

8. A failing sense of direction - The sense of direction and spatial orientation commonly starts to deteriorate with the onset of dementia. This can mean not recognizing once-familiar landmarks and forgetting regularly used directions. It also becomes more difficult to follow a series of directions and step-by-step instructions.

9. Being repetitive - Repetition is common in dementia because of memory loss and general behavioral changes. The person may repeat daily tasks, such as shaving, or they may collect items obsessively. They also may repeat the same questions in a conversation after they've been answered.

10. Struggling to adapt to change - For someone in the early stages of dementia, the experience can cause fear. Suddenly, they can't remember people they know or follow what others are saying. They can't remember why they went to the store, and they get lost on the way home. Because of this, they might crave routine and be afraid to try new experiences. Difficulty adapting to change is also a typical symptom of early dementia.

Reprinted from <https://www.healthline.com>, Medically reviewed by Timothy J. Legg, PhD, CRNP on April 10, 2017 — Written by Valencia Higuera and Mary Ellen Ellis

Upcoming Events

Brain Health Class – at The Hub on Smith, 211 Smith Street

Thursday, February 8th 5:30 – 6:30 PM

Dementia Friendly Sessions—Become a Dementia Friend—all are welcome at DFW offices, 1 S. Scott, Suite #2

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursdays
February 13 th from 5:30-6:30 PM	February 28 th 8:00-9:00 AM	February 1 st 5:30-6:30 PM
		February 8 th 8:00-9:00 AM

Friendly Visitors Training— DFW offices, 1 S. Scott, Suite #2

Thursday, February 22th from 1:00 to 3:00 PM

Teepa Snow's Positive Approach® to Care Workshops - DFW offices, 1 S. Scott, Suite #2

- Normal Aging/Not Normal Aging – Thursday, February 1st from 9:30 AM to Noon
- Positive Physical Approach™ and Hand-under Hand® - Tuesday, February 6th, 9:30 AM to Noon
- Teepa's GEMS® and Using Skills that Make a Difference – Wednesday, February 14th from 9:00 AM to Noon

- Normal Aging/Not Normal Aging – Saturday, March 17th from 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM
- Positive Physical Approach™ and Hand-under Hand® - Saturday, March 24th from 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM
- Teepa's GEMS® and Using Skills that Make a Difference - Saturday, March 31st from 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM