

## Dementia: Symptoms and Causes

Dementia describes a group of symptoms affecting memory, thinking and social abilities severely enough to interfere with your daily life. It isn't a specific disease, but several different diseases may cause dementia. Though dementia generally involves memory loss, memory loss has different causes. Having memory loss alone doesn't mean you have dementia. Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of a progressive dementia in older adults, but there are a number of causes of dementia. Depending on the cause, some dementia symptoms may be reversible.

### Symptoms:

Dementia symptoms vary depending on the cause, but common signs and symptoms include: Cognitive changes, memory loss, which is usually noticed by a spouse or someone else, difficulty communicating or finding words, difficulty with visual and spatial abilities, such as getting lost while driving, difficulty reasoning or problem-solving, difficulty handling complex tasks, difficulty with planning and organizing, difficulty with coordination and motor functions, confusion and disorientation, psychological changes, personality changes, depression, anxiety, inappropriate behaviour, paranoia, agitation, hallucinations.

### Causes:

Dementia is caused by damage to or loss of nerve cells and their connections in the brain. Depending on the area of the brain that's affected by the damage, dementia can affect people differently and cause different symptoms. Dementias are often grouped by what they have in common, such as the protein or proteins deposited in the brain or the part of the brain that's affected. Some diseases look like dementias, such as those caused by a reaction to medications or vitamin deficiencies, and they might improve with treatment.