

# About Dementia

## Let's start by talking about what dementia is.

The brain is a very complex organ that controls all functions of the body, interprets information from the outside world and encompasses the essence of mind and soul.

The brain is responsible for many things including; intelligence, creativity, emotion and memory.

Dementia is a term used to describe a collection of symptoms associated with many different types of conditions of the physical brain. The degree and extent of the brain changes will influence the symptoms of dementia an individual will experience. There are, of course other influences such as the individual's personality and life experiences etc.

Doctors are working hard to find a cure for the associated illnesses but so far there is no cure but there is medication which can be of benefit and lots of practical experience in finding ways to help.



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Dementia is progressive, so difficulties increase over time. In some people changes occur over a short time but in most, the changes are slow, over a number of years. Getting help and advice early can mean the person with dementia and their family and friends, can be better prepared to deal with the changes dementia brings and live life as fully as possible.

Dementia is not a diagnosis it is a word that describes a set of symptoms.

There are many different types of dementia, caused by different brain changes. Everyone with dementia is unique. Dementia affects everyone differently and it is important not to make assumptions.

## What to do if you are worried about having dementia?

If you or your family are worried about your memory you are not on your own.

There are some things you can do: -

- **Discuss it together - Talk to your GP. The doctor will be able to set you on the path to getting a diagnosis, possible treatment including medication which can slow the progress of some types of dementia**
- **In Scotland, there is a Government Commitment that everyone diagnosed with dementia will receive a year's post diagnosis support. This will provide lots of practical advice and help you to remain in your community and live well with dementia.**

## What help and support is there for family and friends?

The person who provides the support might be a family member, friend or neighbour and many people describe helping with everyday tasks rewarding but also may cause tiredness, worry, and be isolating. It is therefore important to get time out.

- **Join a Carer support group**
- **Don't be afraid to ask for help from friends, family or place of worship**
- **Ask for an assessment of your needs and what support you need as a carer.**

## Most importantly make space and time for yourself.

There are many services that can help: -

- **Memory clinics**
- **Community mental health teams**
- **Social workers, care managers or support workers**
- **Home care services**
- **Telecare to keep people safe**
- **Benefits advice**
- **Support groups for both the individual and the family**
- **3rd sector organisations offering services and support.**

There is also a list of organisations and further information that can help at the end of this leaflet.

# Further Information

## **Alzheimer Scotland Dumfries**

8 Gordon St, Dumfries DG1 1EG | 01387 261303

## **Local Dementia advisor**

[www.alzscot.org/living-with-dementia/getting-support/find-support-near-you/dementia-advisor-dumfries](http://www.alzscot.org/living-with-dementia/getting-support/find-support-near-you/dementia-advisor-dumfries)

**Free Phone** 0808 808 3000

## **Alzheimer Scotland Help line**

[www.alzscot.org](http://www.alzscot.org) | [helpline@alzscot.org](mailto:helpline@alzscot.org) | 0808 808 3000

## **Care information Scotland**

[www.careinfoscotland.co.uk](http://www.careinfoscotland.co.uk) | 08456 00100

## **Citizens Advice Scotland**

[www.cas.org.uk/bureaux](http://www.cas.org.uk/bureaux) (Useful for advice on Welfare benefits)

## **Dumfries and Galloway Carers Centre**

[www.dgalcarers.co.uk](http://www.dgalcarers.co.uk)

## **The Princess Royal Trust for Carers**

[www.carers.org/home](http://www.carers.org/home) | 01402 215066

## **MECOPP Carers Centre Supporting minority ethnic carers**

[www.mecopp.org.uk](http://www.mecopp.org.uk) | 0131 4672994

**Create a playlist** [www.playlistforlife.org.uk](http://www.playlistforlife.org.uk)

**A useful form to write your life story on can be found at:**

[www.alzscot.org/information\\_and\\_resources](http://www.alzscot.org/information_and_resources)

**Your GP practice and Local Social Work department**

