

# 7 Early Signs of Dementia to Watch Out For



Dementia is a disease which leaves sufferers with memory loss and cognitive decline. It affects around 5.7 million Americans and this number is set to rise to 14 million by 2050.

But some memory loss happens naturally due to aging. So how can you be sure your loved one is actually suffering from early signs of dementia?

If diagnosed early, it's possible to treat dementia. The right treatment can slow down the progression of symptoms. This can make a real difference and give more time and better quality of life. If you're concerned about the early signs of dementia, read on for 7 symptoms to look out for.

## 1. Subtle Memory Loss

One of the most common early signs of dementia is subtle changes in memory. These can be small things, like forgetting an appointment or the names of people. They may come back later, or they may not, but it is persistent.

If they are asking you for the same information often and don't seem to remember asking before, it could be a sign. They may also use generic terms for people they know (i.e. 'that lady', 'that child').

This often begins with short-term memory loss. Sufferers can remember events from long ago, but not things that happened yesterday. They may be able to recall a vacation they went on 20 years ago, but not what they ate for lunch.

## 2. Communication Issues

Another early sign of dementia is when your loved one has difficulty communicating. Sufferers may find that they can't find the right words to express themselves. They may struggle to think of simple words or even names when describing something.

This can also include stopping in the middle of a sentence and being unable to carry on speaking. They may use words or phrases in the wrong context or be unable to understand sarcasm or tone.

It can often lead to feelings of frustration or anger for the sufferer. They are unable to articulate what they mean and makes communication very difficult.

## 3. Visual Problems

Another sign of dementia is having issues with their vision. They may have difficulties when reading things or with different colors and contrasts.

Your loved one may also experience impaired depth perception. They may not be able to judge the distance of things right and have issues with spatial awareness.

This can be something as simple as putting a glass on a counter and misjudging it. But this can lead to serious consequences, especially when this occurs while driving.

## 4. Forgetting How to Do Things

Another symptom of dementia is forgetting how to actually do things. They seem to forget things that were once easy, everyday tasks.

This can include forgetting how to make a cup of tea or not knowing how to get somewhere they visit often. They may also forget to turn the lights off or close doors.

This can be dangerous if they live alone. They may have forgotten to turn off the stove or lock the front door at night. If they are displaying these symptoms often, see a professional for a diagnosis.

## 5. Feelings of Apathy

If your loved one starts feeling apathetic toward things they used to enjoy, it could be another sign.

If they once enjoyed going for a walk in the park or playing a game, they may now have no interest in it. They could lose interest in seeing friends and family members or no longer want to leave the house.

Their emotions may seem to hit a flat line and nothing rouses their interest any more. They may be aware of their symptoms and become reclusive out of shame or embarrassment. Be there for them and reach out to help.

## 6. Confusion in Familiar Places

Your loved one may also begin to show confusion when they are somewhere they have visited often. If they go to a restaurant or someone's house, they may not recognize it.

They could also lose track of time too or perceive it in a very different way. This includes examples such as forgetting dates, months or seasons. They may forget that they saw you or another loved one recently, too.

Time may move in a different way for them. Twenty minutes could seem like hours to them and it can leave them feeling confused.

## 7. Changes in Mood or Personality

Changes in mood are another very common sign and you may notice that they aren't as happy or outgoing as they used to be. They may not even notice this change in themselves but others around them will.

Rapid mood swings are very common – going from happy and chatty to sad and closed off. Or someone once shy could become very outgoing. Depression is another sign and they may become very low and experience anxiety, too.

They may go off into a rage or get angry and annoyed at the slightest things. Their world has become very confusing and this can be very overwhelming, so be patient.

## These Are the Early Signs of Dementia You Need to Look Out For

Dementia is a devastating disease which can have some terrible symptoms. It doesn't only affect the sufferer, but those around them too. If you catch these early signs of dementia soon enough, you can find the right treatment.

Does your loved one suffer from dementia and need special care? Contact Families Choice Home Care today to learn more about how we can help you and your loved one.



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