



Dementia Warning Signs

It's important to see your primary doctor if you are experiencing changes in your memory, mood, and behavior. Having a memory problem does not necessarily mean someone has a dementia-related illness. Medical conditions such as stroke, B12 deficiency, hypothyroidism, depression and infections can cause dementia-like symptoms and are treatable if diagnosed. If the symptoms are caused by dementia, an early diagnosis can allow for the opportunity to connect with support, education, and medical treatments.

Although each individual is unique, experts have identified common warning signs of dementia, including:

Recent memory loss: Occasionally forgetting names or what to buy at the store and then remembering them later is normal. A person living with dementia will have memory loss that is frequent and will impact their ability to function in their daily life.

Confusion of time and place: It is normal to forget where you are going once in a while. Individuals living with dementia may be disoriented to time, place and immediate environment (e.g. not knowing where they are).

Difficulty performing familiar tasks: It is normal to get lost occasionally while driving. A person living with dementia might have increased trouble while driving in familiar areas and get lost.

Problems with language: Trying to find the appropriate words while in conversation sometimes is very common. However, someone living with dementia might have issues with following or initiating a conversation.

Decreased or poor judgment: We can make poor decisions once in a while. A person with dementia might make decisions that negatively impact their wellbeing more frequently and start paying less attention to their daily needs.

Problems with abstract thinking: It is normal to have difficulty balancing a budget. Someone who has a dementia-related illness might forget what numbers are, or how to add and subtract.

Forget where they put things: Everyone misplaces their keys or glasses now and then. A person living with dementia might repeatedly put their items in places that they do not belong (e.g., keys in the freezer).

Changes in mood and personality: Anyone can become sad or moody from time to time. A person living with dementia can have quick mood changes, such as from calm to anger. They also might start becoming uncomfortable in social situations.

Loss of initiative: It is normal to not want to do housework, or work tasks. A person living with dementia may no longer initiate things that they once enjoyed.

AFA's National toll-free helpline is open 9 a.m.-9 p.m. (ET), Monday-Friday and Saturdays & Sundays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (ET) to answer questions and provide referrals to local resources. Call 866-232-8484 or email info@alzfdn.org.