

Other useful contacts:



Age NI Advice Line

0808 808 7575

www.ageuk.org.uk

Alzheimer's Society

(028) 9066 4100

www.alzheimers.org.uk/northernireland

CAUSE

(families, partners, friends caring for mental health)

0845 6030 291

www.cause.org.uk

Lifeline

0808 808 8000

www.lifelinehelpline.info

MindWise

(028) 9040 2323

www.mindwisenv.org

How to contact us:



Community Mental Health Team for Older People Tel: (028) 9504 0346

operates from Monday to Friday
9am to 5pm

We also offer an extended telephone advice and support service for people living with DEMENTIA and their carers operating:
Monday to Friday until 8pm
Saturday to Sunday 10am to 2pm

If you need to speak to someone outside these hours please contact:
Regional Emergency Social Work Service
(028) 9504 9999

www.belfasttrust.hscni.net/services/CommunityMentalHealthTeams

HSC Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

What is Dementia?



What is dementia?

As we become older becoming forgetful can be a very normal part of life. In fact only 1 in 100 of us will pass through life without any memory problems. Dementia however is more than simply being a little forgetful. It is a common set of symptoms that occur when the brain is affected by certain diseases that cause damage to brain cells. The chance of developing dementia increases with age.

What changes might occur?

Dementia will affect everyone differently. The symptoms of dementia can include:

- forgetfulness.
- difficulty concentrating e.g. reading.
- difficulty making decisions.
- repeating yourself in conversation.
- finding it difficult to find the correct word.
- misplacing things.
- feeling mixed up with places or people or time.
- seeing or hearing things that are not there.
- losing interest in yourself or your home.

There may be changes in some

aspects of personality or a loss of confidence. Any of these changes may understandably lead to increased fear and anxiety. Often the person living with dementia is not aware of the changes or the extent of the changes but their friends or relatives may observe the changes.

Will dementia get worse over time?

Dementia becomes gradually worse over time, this progressive change is usually very gradual allowing time for the person to try and adjust to the changes that are occurring. Many of the symptoms will vary from day to day and can be worse in the evening times. As dementia progresses it gradually affects the person's ability to function independently but support is available to try and help them to maintain their independence for as long as possible.

Will I get dementia if my relative has dementia?

Having a relative who has dementia does not mean that you will develop dementia. Any lifestyle that involves smoking, drinking too much alcohol, not exercising or eating an unhealthy diet increases the risk of developing a dementia in later life. Another risk factor is age; the older we are the greater our risk of developing dementia. Some people develop dementia at a very young age in their 30s, 40s or 50s but this is very uncommon. These individuals have abnormal genes and so their families may be at increased risk of developing dementia.

Community Mental Health Team for Older People

Members of the team can listen and provide additional information regarding dementia and let you know what support is available for you and your family. A referral can be made by your GP or you can contact the team directly. Contact details on the back page.