

# Understanding Dementia



## In this factsheet, you will learn about:

- Types of dementia
- Changes that may occur over time for people living with dementia

## What is dementia?

### Dementia

Dementia is an umbrella term that describes a set of symptoms that can be caused by a variety of disorders.

#### Alzheimer's Disease

- The most common type of dementia (50-65% of dementia cases)
- Gradual degeneration of the brain over time
- Usually occurs after age 65, but can be diagnosed much earlier

#### Vascular Dementia

- Occurs when blood, nutrients, and oxygen do not reach the brain
- Can occur after stroke or with cerebrovascular disease

#### Frontotemporal Dementia

- Symptoms usually start in mid-to-late life (45 to 65 years)
- Progressive degeneration of the front and sides of the brain
- Changes in personality and behaviour are common

#### Lewy Body Dementia

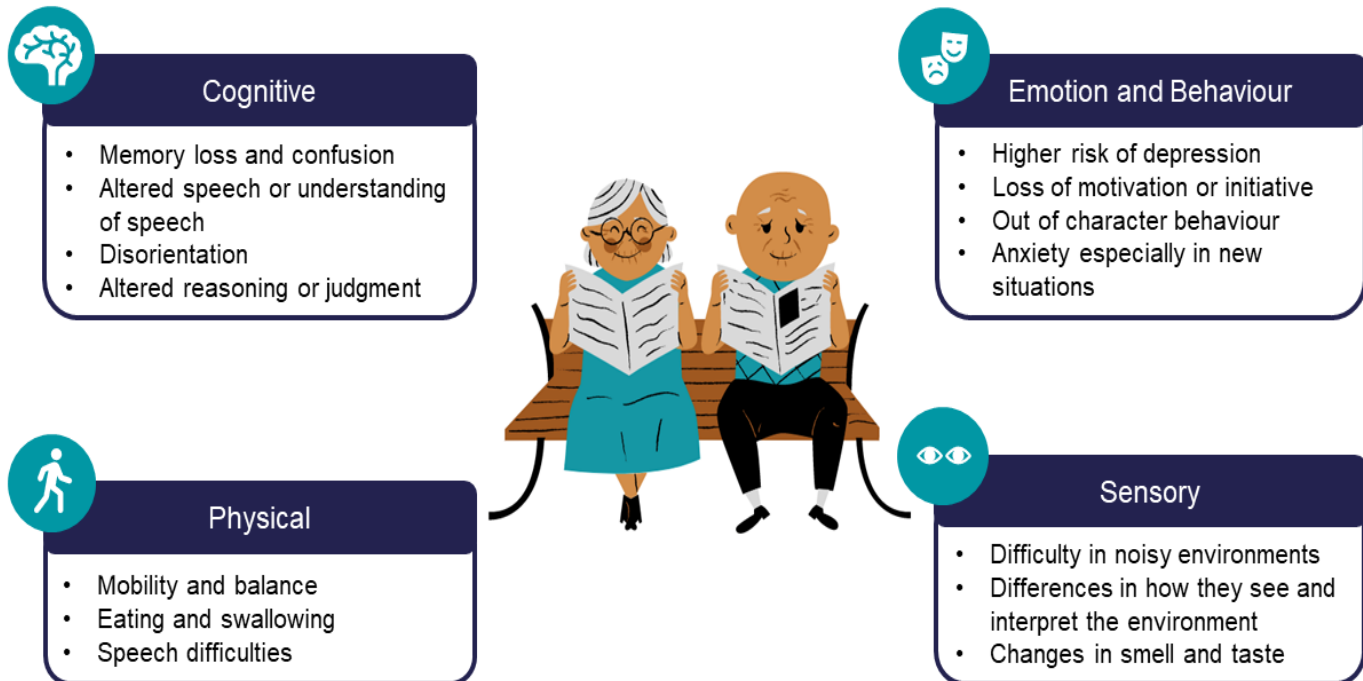
- Protein deposits in the brain (Lewy bodies)
- Often has changes in movement similar to Parkinson's disease

#### Mixed Dementia

- Diagnosed when two or more types of dementia are present
- Often includes both Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia

Learn more and get support at: [www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca)

# Changes that may be experienced with dementia\*



The way that people communicate their feelings of frustration, distress, pain, or sadness may change with dementia. People living with dementia may rely on nonverbal communication more often to express their feelings. This non-verbal communication is sometimes interpreted as a problem even though it is a normal response to the events around them. By paying attention to the person living with dementia and their responses, people can better understand their feelings, the cause of them, and how to help the person living with dementia.

**Even with these changes, people living with dementia retain many abilities.** They can have meaningful lives by continuing to participate in activities that they enjoy or by discovering new hobbies. Take each moment at a time, focus on what is possible, and adapt to changes as they come.

**Note:** A person that experiences some of these changes does not necessarily have dementia. If you or a person you care about experiences these changes, please talk to your primary healthcare provider.

Brought to you by the University of Waterloo and University of Northern British Columbia.

Learn more! Explore helpful resources and tools at: [www.dementiaexercise.com](http://www.dementiaexercise.com)