

Test your Knowledge

1. What is dementia?

2. Is dementia only found in seniors? T or F

3. Mrs. Doe has choir rehearsal on Tuesday night, three deadlines that are due on Friday for work, for which she will not meet one of them, and has agreed to keep her grandchildren on Friday night. Her husband notices that she appears fatigued and moody and has lost interest in everyday activities.

Does Mrs. Doe seem to have early signs of dementia? Yes or No? Why?

4. Name some early signs of dementia.

5. Why would one hire a professional caregiver?

6. How might one hire a professional caregiver?

What is Dementia?

Dementia is a catch-all term for changes in the brain that cause a loss of functioning that interferes with daily life. It can diminish focus, the ability to pay attention, language skills, problem solving and visual perception. Dementia can also make it difficult for a person to control his or her emotions and can even lead to personality changes.

10 Warning Signs of Dementia

Here are some symptoms to watch for:

- 1. Difficulty with everyday tasks.** Everyone makes mistakes, but people with dementia may find it increasingly difficult to do things like keep track of monthly bills or follow a recipe while cooking, according to the Alzheimer's Association. They may also find it difficult to concentrate on tasks, take much longer to do them or have trouble finishing them.
- 2. Repetition.** Asking a question over and over or telling the same story about a recent event multiple times are common indicators of mild or moderate Alzheimer's, according to the Cleveland Clinic.
- 3. Communication problems.** Observe if a loved one has trouble joining in conversations or following along with them, stops abruptly in the middle of a thought or struggles to think of words or the name of objects.
- 4. Getting lost.** People with dementia may have difficulty with visual and spatial abilities. That can manifest itself in problems like getting lost while driving, according to the Mayo Clinic.
- 5. Personality changes.** A loved one who begins acting unusually anxious, confused, fearful or suspicious, or becomes upset easily and seems depressed, is cause for concern.
- 6. Confusion about time and place.** If someone forgets where they are or can't remember how they got there, that's a red flag. Another worrisome sign is disorientation about time—for example, routinely forgetting what day of the week it is, said Jason Karlawish, M.D., a neurologist and professor of medicine at the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine and co-director of the Penn Memory Center.
- 7. Misplacing things.** Someone with dementia may put things in unusual places and may have difficulty retracing their steps to find misplaced items, the Alzheimer's Association notes.
- 8. Troubling behavior.** If your family member seems to have increasingly poor judgment when handling money or neglects grooming and cleanliness, pay attention.
- 9. Loss of interest.** Not feeling especially social sometimes is one thing, but a sudden and routine loss of interest in family, friends, work and social events is a warning sign of dementia.
- 10. Forgetting old memories.** Memory loss which becomes more persistent is often one of the first signs of dementia.

Some people who experience memory loss or have difficulty with attention, decision making, language or reasoning may have a condition known as mild cognitive impairment (MCI). The condition causes a noticeable decline, but the changes are less severe than with dementia and a person can still perform normal daily activities, according to the Cleveland Clinic.

People with MCI are at an increased risk of developing dementia.