

ENCOURAGEMENT  
HOPE UNDERSTANDING  
FREEDOM PLEASURE RELIEF  
**DEMENTIA AID**  
INSPIRATION RELAXATION  
GUIDANCE TRUST HELP  
CONFIDENCE EXHILARATION  
**ACCOMPLISHMENT**  
STIMULATING LIGHTENING  
COMFORT CLEAN REVITALISING  
**OPTIMISM PLEASURE**  
WHOLENESS SOOTHING  
QUALITY CARE PROTECTION  
SUPPORT WELLBEING VIGOR  
HAPPINESS VITALITY REST  
GUIDANCE TRUST HELP  
DEVELOPMENT NOURISHING  
**HOPE HEALTH LOVE**  
REFRESHING STIMULATING  
**HEALING AND RELAXATION**  
**SANCTUARY ENERGY**  
STRENGTH EDUCATION SAFE  
ASSIST MAINTAIN AID  
**CARE** PRIORY

Dementia is a condition that is often misunderstood. This leaflet aims to help you understand dementia – its causes, effects and treatment.

## **What is dementia?**

Dementia is the progressive loss of mental ability eg to remember, to understand and to make judgements. This is in conjunction with the decline in the ability to communicate. Dementia can also affect a person's ability to control their emotions and therefore people living with dementia can often feel sad, frightened or angry about what is happening to them. The way in which we support people determines each individual's quality of life.

## **Who gets dementia?**

Dementia affects 5% of the over 65s and 20% of those over 80.<sup>1</sup> It is associated with 'old age' because the likelihood of contracting a disease that harms the brain increases with age and this can lead to dementia. Subsequently, dementia is rare in those aged below 60 but Priory also offers care for those with early onset dementia.

## **What are the symptoms?**

In the early stages friends and family may notice someone having difficulty remembering things or small changes in their personality. Over time the following symptoms may appear:

- Disturbances of judgement, calculation, language, memory, thinking and understanding, (cognitive problems)
- Difficulties in carrying out complex tasks and eventually with daily living activities, such as personal hygiene and dressing (functioning problems)
- Changes in mood, loss of emotional control and withdrawal from activities, social interaction and previous interests (emotional problems)

# SOOTHING RELAXATION REVITALISING ENERGY HOPE HEALING AND SANCTUARY PEACE

## **How will it affect me ?**

Dementia usually progresses slowly and will impact on your independence. Initially memory loss is usually short-term memory whilst long-term memory can stay intact longer. Those with dementia can often enjoy a good quality of life for a number of years. As you become less independent you will need increasing levels of support.

## **I think I may be developing dementia**

Contacting your GP is often the easiest way to get help and further advice. He or she will ask you about your symptoms, your medical history and examine you. You may be required to give a sample of blood and urine for testing to identify other conditions that could be causing your symptoms.

If you're worried about talking to your GP, consider writing down your concerns and questions. You can also take a friend, family member or carer with you.

Your GP may also refer you to a specialist for further assessment. This will help to determine what type of dementia you have so you can be given the most appropriate treatment. You may also be asked to have a brain scan, such as a computerised tomography (CT) or computerised axial tomography (CAT) scan.

## How can I find help and support?

People with dementia and their families should seek help to receive the support that is available locally. For example emotional and practical support is available from:

- GPs
- Admiral nurses (specialist dementia nurses)
- Alzheimer's Society or Carers UK for advice on keeping people safe and respite care to give carers a break
- Health and social care services for advice on mobility and daily living activities and on how to adapt and develop skills to enable independent living
- Occupational therapists
- Voluntary organisations

The Department of Health is working towards giving everyone with dementia their own personal dementia adviser. They will help people with dementia find the right information, care, support and advice.

# ON NOURISHING QUALITY IENT HELP CARE GUIDANCE SS SOOTHING STIMULATING

## **What types of treatment are available?**

Dementia tends to progress slowly. People will require increasing levels of support as they become less independent.

Whilst there is no cure for progressive dementia, medication (especially cholinesterase inhibitors) plays an important role in controlling and slowing down the symptoms and can help those with dementia to live independently for longer. The treatment is also dependent on the type of dementia.

Mental activity is believed to slow the progress of certain types of dementia. Doing puzzles and crosswords will help to keep the brain active.

There are medicines available to help with symptoms such as tranquilisers for help with feelings of aggression or restlessness. Antidepressants and other medicines can treat anxiety and depression.

Psychological therapy (talking therapies) can help. Some people with dementia may find group activities and discussions helpful. Cognitive stimulation therapy, as the name suggests, aims to stimulate the mind and reminiscence therapy is the discussion of past events in groups, using familiar objects and photographs to prompt recall.

There is a small amount of evidence to suggest that aromatherapy may help those affected feel less agitated.

## What causes it?

Dementia is caused by damage to the brain. This could be the result of an acquired brain injury or a medical condition that damages the brain tissues. It is very important to establish the exact cause of a dementia as soon as possible as a small number of cases are reversible and the treatment differs depending upon the cause. Alzheimer's Disease is attributable for around 62% of dementia cases.

Causes include:

- Degenerative diseases resulting in progressive deterioration or death of nerve cells eg Alzheimer's Disease, Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease, Huntington's Disease, Parkinson's Disease, dementia with Lewy Bodies and frontotemporal dementia (FTD)
- Conditions that damage the blood vessels supplying the brain eg atherosclerosis. This type of dementia is known as vascular dementia and accounts for about 20% of dementia cases
- Conditions producing a reversible dementia eg hypothyroidism (underactive thyroid), vitamin B12 deficiency, folate deficiency, syphilis of the nervous system, subdural haematoma (a blood clot round the brain, usually following a blow to the head), hypercalcaemia (abnormally high calcium levels), undiagnosed diabetes, brain tumours or infections, and a condition called normal pressure hydrocephalus
- Medication that can interfere with memory and concentration and result in dementia-like symptoms (eg sleeping tablets and tranquilisers) as well as antidepressants and certain drugs with an anticholinergic effect (eg some hay fever and cold remedies, some stomach ulcer drugs and diarrhoea treatments)

## How is it diagnosed?

Unfortunately there is no single test to identify dementia. Blood tests and brain scans can help and are important in ruling out reversible causes. Dementia is diagnosed by the assessment of symptoms and the results of brief questionnaires that test ability to recall facts or draw simple diagrams.

## Why should I choose Priory?

### Our service

Priory care homes provide a dignified and individual service for people who require:

- Dementia nursing care
- General nursing care
- Respite care

We encourage all our residents to have as full and active a lifestyle as possible. Each resident is treated as an individual, with dignity and is encouraged to exercise choice in all aspects of their care. Above all we want to offer residents a 'home from home' and keep rules and regulations to an absolute minimum.

We understand how important it is for residents to feel safe and secure in their environment and actively encourage them to bring along their own personal possessions to help them feel at home.

### Expertise and innovation

Our dementia service is headed by a specialist in the field of dementia. A Dementia Strategy Team has been established and a Priory Dementia Manifesto is in place.

We are implementing key objective 11 of Living Well with Dementia, a national dementia strategy with the aim of exceeding this key objective.

We have a four tier training and development programme for all our staff and support professional development at all levels.

Memory boxes at the entrance to every bedroom prompt and stimulate reminiscence. The memory boxes encourage family involvement and promote conversation between residents, staff and visitors.

Reminiscence rooms contain items of memorabilia from the residents' youth and early adult years. Each room is designed to stimulate memory recall, generate conversation and to promote reassurance amongst those residents who may be suffering from dementia.

This document has been reviewed by  
Dr Daniel J Nightingale July 2010

Sources:

- 1 Living Well with Dementia: A National Dementia Strategy
- 2 Dementia UK. Summary of key findings.  
KNAPP, PRINCE et al, Alzheimer's Society 2007
- 3 [www.psychnet-uk.com/dsm\\_iv/dementia.htm](http://www.psychnet-uk.com/dsm_iv/dementia.htm) 21 August 2009

**Abbey Court Care Home (Opening August 2010)**

Falcon Way, Bourne, Lincolnshire, PE10 0GT  
Tel: 0845 2 774679

**Amberley House Care Home**

358 Ubberley Road, Bentilee, Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire, ST2 0QS  
Tel: 01782 331 200 Fax: 01782 337 351

**Atkinson Court Care Home**

Ings Road, Cross Green, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS9 9EJ  
Tel: 0113 391 8800 Fax: 0113 391 8805

**Bannview House Care Home (Opening November 2010)**

23 Bannview Road, Banbridge, County Down, BT32 3RL  
Tel: 0845 2 774679

**Ben Madigan Care Home**

36 Mill Road, Newtownabbey, County Antrim, BT36 7BH  
Tel: 02890 860 787 Fax: 02890 851 429

**Bentley Court Care Home**

29 Nordley Road, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV11 1PX  
Tel: 01902 722 100 Fax: 01902 867 594

**Berelands House Care Home**

1 Boydfield Court, Prestwick, South Ayrshire, KA9 2GY  
Tel: 01292 677 760 Fax: 01292 677 765

**Blair House Care Home (Opening 2011)**

107 Dakota Avenue, Newtownards, County Down, BT23 4QX  
Tel: 0845 2 774679

**Buckingham Lodge Care Home (Opening September 2010)**

Buckingham Close, Carbrooke, Norfolk, IP25 6WL  
Tel: 0845 2 774679

**Charles Court Care Home**

The Ploughman, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR2 6GG  
Tel: 01432 374 330 Fax: 01432 374 335

**Cooper House Care Home**

80 Cooper Lane, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD6 3NJ  
Tel: 01274 711 500 Fax: 01274 711 510

**Dalton Court Care Home**

Europe Way, Cockermouth, Cumbria, CA13 0RJ  
Tel: 01900 898 640 Fax: 01900 898 645

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