

# TYPES OF DEMENTIA

Dementia is the broad term used to describe a number of different conditions affecting the brain, including Alzheimer's. This is a short article about some of the common causes of dementia. We have also done other articles on the signs and symptoms of dementia and about Alzheimer's awareness month as a whole on our News and Events page.



## ALZHEIMER'S

Alzheimer's is the most common cause of dementia. Alzheimer's is when the connection between the cells in your brain are lost. Proteins build up and form abnormal structures and eventually nerve cells die and brain tissue is lost. The brain also contains an important chemical that is integral to sending signals between cells. People that suffer with Alzheimer's have less of this chemical in their brain, so signals are not passed on as well. There are some treatments that can help boost the level of this chemical, which can help ease symptoms of dementia. Alzheimer's is a progressive disease, so it gets worse over time.

## VASCULAR

Vascular is the second most common type of dementia. It affects around 150,000 people in the UK. Vascular dementia is caused by the reduced blood supply to the brain due to affected blood vessels. Blood is delivered through the vascular system, so if this becomes damaged and blocked, blood will fail to reach the brain. Causing brain cells to die. Which leads to cognitive problems such as memory or reasoning. When these problems start to have a significant impact on daily life this is known as vascular dementia.

While memory loss is an early sign of Alzheimer's it is not usually the main early symptom of vascular. The most common early symptoms are to do with organisation and problem solving, such as following recipes.



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## YOUNG-ONSET

The likelihood of developing dementia increases significantly with age. When a person below the age of 65 develops dementia, this is known as young-onset dementia. Over 42,000 people in the UK are living with young-onset dementia. A younger person with dementia is much more likely to have a rarer form of dementia. Although a younger person with dementia is also less likely to have memory loss as an early symptom. As young-onset dementia can be rarer it may take longer in diagnosing the condition. This can be because professionals may not associate symptoms with dementia and might consider them to be signs of stress, since memory loss is not the main symptom and it is more likely to be changes in personality and behaviours.

## FRONTOTEMPORAL

This refers to the two sets of lobes in the brain that are damaged by this type of dementia. It occurs when nerve cells in these sections of the brain are damaged by disease. This causes the connections between parts of the brain to break down. As the nerve cells die in these parts of the brain the tissue starts to get smaller. There are two types of FTD; behavioural and primary progressive aphasia. The behavioural variant is where the damage causes problems with behaviour and personality. PPA can cause problems with language and communication. Which can lead to problems with understanding the meaning of words. The first noticeable symptoms with FTD will likely be one of these two symptoms.

