

Dementia

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust is committed to improving the level of support and the hospital experience of patients with dementia and their carers. This leaflet gives a general overview of dementia, an introduction to the Butterfly Scheme, tips for carers, and a contact number you may wish to use for additional information and support outside the hospital.

The Butterfly Scheme

The Butterfly Scheme makes sure that hospital staff can identify each person with known or suspected dementia so that they can provide special care. The scheme is summarized in an information leaflet. Please ask staff for a copy of the leaflet.



Tips for carers:

Ensure the patient has their **dentures, glasses, and hearing aids** available and in use as much as possible while in the hospital.

Personalise the patient's environment. Familiar items such as photo albums, a favourite stuffed animal, a blanket from home, or activity they enjoy can alleviate anxiety commonly experienced in the unfamiliar hospital environment.

We ask that you bring **day clothes**, including **sensible shoes** that fit. This helps people with dementia to differentiate between night and day, and to feel more comfortable in the hospital environment.

Please consult staff first about items you wish to bring in.

We will ask you to complete a **'see who I am'** care plan. This will help staff to understand the individual needs of your relative or friend, and enable them to provide person centred care. Please ask a member of staff who will be happy to help you to fill it in.

Notify staff if you notice a change in the patient's usual behaviour. For example, notify staff if the patient is not alert as usual, or displays behaviour that is not typical of the way they normally behave at home (e.g. Increased confusion), or a mix of both.

People living with Dementia are at risk of developing delirium whilst in hospital. Delirium is a condition where people have increased confusion, changes in thinking and a reduced attention span.

To prevent delirium:

We will try to avoid using any medical equipment that may disturb patients, such as urinary catheters (small tubes inserted into the bladder to help patients pass urine without leaving their bed) or intravenous cannulas (drips) unless they are necessary for their treatment.

We will make sure the patient has enough fluids so they do not become dehydrated or constipated. Please let staff know if you think your relative is constipated.

We will ensure that the patient has enough food. We will check that they can feed themselves, and also find out if they have any favourite foods to encourage them to eat. You can also help by bringing in preferred snacks and food. A member of staff will assist patients who are unable to feed themselves.

We will make sure that the patient has easy access to their glasses, hearing aids or any other aids they need. Please bring in any aids that your relative might have left at home.

We will try to get the patient up and moving about as quickly as possible. If necessary they will be given physiotherapy to help them get mobile again.

We will avoid moving patients around the ward or to another ward where possible. However, some moves, for example to comply with infection control requirements, may be unavoidable.

We will try to keep the patient stimulated through low-level activity such as listening to the radio or television. You can help by talking to your relative or friend about their past experiences and memories as this may be calming and reassuring for them. You may even want to bring some photographs or any other mementos.

What is dementia?

Dementia is a general term used to describe a group of conditions that affect how the brain works. It can cause a gradual decline in memory, thinking, understanding, language, and the ability to carry out everyday activities.

Dementia is not a normal part of ageing, although it is more common in older people. It happens when brain cells become damaged and can no longer communicate properly. This damage can have different causes, depending on the type of dementia.

Common symptoms include:

- Memory loss, especially difficulty remembering recent events
- Problems with thinking, problem-solving, or decision-making
- Difficulty finding the right words or understanding conversations
- Changes in mood, behaviour, or personality

Types of dementia?

Alzheimer's disease

This is the most common cause of dementia. During the course of the disease the chemistry and structure of the brain changes, leading to the death of brain cells. Problems with short-term memory are usually the first noticeable sign.

Vascular dementia

Vascular dementia is a type of dementia caused by reduced blood flow to the brain, which damages brain cells.

It can happen after a stroke or a series of small strokes. Symptoms may include problems with thinking, concentration, and decision-making. Memory can also be affected.

Symptoms may develop suddenly or worsen in steps over time. Treatment and support can help manage symptoms and reduce further damage.

Dementia with Lewy bodies

This form of dementia gets its name from tiny abnormal structures that develop inside nerve cells. Their presence in the brain leads to the degeneration of brain tissue. Symptoms can include disorientation and hallucinations, as well as problems with planning, reasoning, and problem solving. Initially memory may be affected to a lesser degree.

Fronto-temporal dementia

Frontotemporal dementia (FTD) is a type of dementia that affects the front and sides of the brain. These areas control behaviour, personality, and language.

It can cause changes in behaviour (such as acting impulsively or differently), and problems with speaking or understanding language. Memory may be less affected at first.

FTD is more likely to affect people under 65. Symptoms usually get worse over time, but support and treatment can help manage them.

Diagnosing dementia

It is very important to get a formal diagnosis. While there is no cure for dementia there is treatment for certain subtypes. Whether you are someone with dementia or a carer, a diagnosis can help with preparing and planning for the future.

Dementia can be diagnosed by a doctor, who should rule out any other conditions that might have similar symptoms to dementia.

The doctor may carry out a number of tests to check basic thinking processes and the ability to perform daily tasks. They may request further tests, such as a brain scan or a more in-depth assessment of memory, concentration and thinking skills.

Community Contact:

A member of staff at Gateway to Care will be pleased to direct you to services available to your borough.

Please dial: 01422 393000 for Calderdale

01484 414933 for Huddersfield

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact:

The Enhanced Care team

Telephone No: 01484 355819.

www.cht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

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