

# 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.** In this leaflet, there is a general overview about 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'** information sheet. This will help staff to understand the individual needs of your relative or friend, and enable them to provide dignified and 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. hallucinating), 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?

The term 'dementia' describes a set of symptoms which include loss of memory, mood changes, and problems with communication and reasoning. These symptoms occur when the brain is damaged by certain diseases, including Alzheimer's disease and damage caused by a series of small strokes (vascular dementia).

Dementia is progressive, which means the symptoms will gradually get worse. How fast dementia progresses will depend on the individual person and what type of dementia they have. Each person is unique and will experience dementia in his/her own way. Often, the person's family and friends are more concerned about the symptoms than the person may be themselves.

## Symptoms of dementia may include the following:

- Loss of memory with particularly short-term memory. For example forgetting what happened earlier in the day, not being able to recall conversations, being repetitive, or forgetting the way home from the shops. Long-term memory is not affected as much.
- Mood changes with people with dementia may be withdrawn, sad, frightened or angry about what is happening to them.
- Communication problems with problems finding the right words for things, for example being able to describe the function of an item instead of naming it.



As the dementia progresses, the person affected will have problems carrying out everyday tasks and will become increasingly dependent on other people.

## What causes dementia?

There are several diseases and conditions that result in 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

If the oxygen supply to the brain fails due to vascular disease, brain cells are likely to die and this can cause the symptoms of vascular dementia.

These symptoms can occur either suddenly, after a stroke, or over time through a series of small strokes.

### 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. Memory may be affected to a lesser degree. This form of dementia shares some characteristics with Parkinson's disease.

### Fronto-temporal dementia (including Pick's disease)

This type of dementia is often misdiagnosed as a depression and usually affects younger people. Changes to the brain is usually focused in the frontal lobes. Personality and behavioural changes are the most common signs.

There are many other conditions which may cause dementia.

Adapted from the Alzheimer's Society 2013 Factsheets

## Diagnosing dementia

It is very important to get a proper diagnosis. It is possible to be prescribed treatment for Alzheimer's disease. 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, including depression.

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.

There is currently no cure for dementia.

Get connected with your community for additional dementia information and support.

## 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:**

Nurse Consultant for Older People  
Huddersfield Royal Infirmary

Telephone No: 01484 355819.

[www.cht.nhs.uk](http://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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برائے مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے می ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

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