

# Worried about your memory?

Helpful tips and guidance to point  
you in the right direction.



## What is dementia?

The World Health Organisation describes dementia as an umbrella term for several diseases that affect the brain's functions such as memory, thinking, and the ability to perform daily activities.

The most common forms of dementia are Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, dementia with Lewy bodies and frontotemporal dementia.

## Five things you should know

Dementia is not a natural part of ageing – it's not called getting old, it's called getting ill

Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain and no two types of dementia are the same

Dementia is not just about memory loss, there is so much more to it

People with dementia can still stay active and be involved in their communities

There is support available to help you

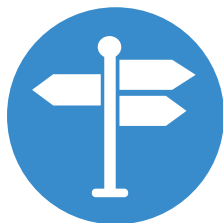
## Worried about your memory?

Becoming forgetful doesn't mean you have dementia. Memory loss can be caused by physical or mental health problems, and sometimes it's just a normal sign of ageing. But it's always better to know.

If you are worried about your memory or think you may have dementia, speaking to your GP is the starting point.

Your GP will ask questions about the symptoms and carry out a physical examination. In advance of the appointment you can use the Alzheimer's Society symptoms checklist online at [alzheimers.org.uk](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk)

Finding the reason for any changes you're experiencing can help you to get the right treatment and support. Your GP may refer you to a consultant to carry out a more detailed assessment.



## I am awaiting a diagnosis or have just been diagnosed with dementia, what can I do?

**You're not alone.** There are lots of ways to connect with people who understand what you're going through.

### Alzheimer's Society

You can get advice and information, whether you are worried about your memory, waiting for a referral or already diagnosed. If you need to talk to someone about dementia, you can contact your local Alzheimer's Society Dementia Advisor.

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#### Antrim/Ballymena Support Worker:

☎ 028 2588 1708

✉ [antrimballymena@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:antrimballymena@alzheimers.org.uk)

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#### East Antrim Support Worker:

☎ 028 9336 2940

✉ [eastantrim@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:eastantrim@alzheimers.org.uk)

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#### National Dementia Support Line:

☎ 0333 150 3456

🌐 [alzheimers.org.uk](http://alzheimers.org.uk)

### Northern Trust Carer Hub

This is a central contact where you can be signposted to local support or receive other information.

The Trust's Carers' Co-ordinator can help carers by:

Providing information, advice and resources for carers

Providing information and support to carers in the Northern Trust area

Promoting training to empower and support carers

Gathering information about the needs of carers

The Hub is available Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm

☎ 028 2766 1210

✉ [carers.coordinator@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:carers.coordinator@northerntrust.hscni.net)



## Stay healthy and keep active

- ✓ Eat healthily and maintain a healthy weight
- ✓ Be socially active and be more physically active
- ✓ Drink less alcohol
- ✓ Stop smoking
- ✓ Keep warm enough
- ✓ Get enough sleep
- ✓ If you often feel low or irritable, you may be depressed – speak to your GP if it continues or gets worse
- ✓ Get your hearing checked regularly
- ✓ Get your eyes tested regularly
- ✓ Pay attention to foot care and make sure your shoes and slippers fit well
- ✓ Ask your GP about vaccines
- ✓ Control diabetes and high blood



## Make your home dementia friendly

- ✓ Improve home lighting
- ✓ Remove any trips or hazards
- ✓ Use colours and contrast to help things stand out
- ✓ Install smoke alarms and a carbon monoxide detector, if you don't already have them
- ✓ At night, consider leaving a light on in the bathroom and keep a low energy light bulb switched on in the hall landing
- ✓ Ask your local fire service about a FREE home safety visit
  - 📞 028 9266 4221
  - 🌐 [Nifrs.org](http://Nifrs.org)
- ✓ Are you over 65? If yes, then you are at greatest risk of a home accident. For more information, please contact the Health and Wellbeing team on
  - 📞 028 2563 3394
  - ✉ [wellbeing@midandeantrim.gov.uk](mailto:wellbeing@midandeantrim.gov.uk)



## Plan ahead

Make sure your finances and affairs (such as wills, powers of attorney and advance decisions) are in good order.

 [alzheimers.org.uk](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk)

Check if you are entitled to any financial support. Make the Call, a free government helpline, can check eligibility.

If you're still working, you may be able to carry on doing so. It's important to talk to your employer.

If you drive, you must tell the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency about your diagnosis.




## Accessing social care

If you think you need help and support from your local Health and Social Care Trust, the first step is to ask for a needs assessment.


To arrange, contact your local Health and Social Services directly. Your GP or other professional involved in your care may also refer you.

For someone who is under 65 and no diagnosis of dementia their first point of contact is their GP.

For someone who is under 65 and has a diagnosis of dementia they should contact Mental Health Outpatients.

 028 9151 0107

For someone who is over 65 contact the Short-Term Assessment Team.

 028 9598 8098, option 2

# Support Organisations

## Alzheimer's Society

Dementia Advisors provide information and practical guidance to help people understand dementia, cope with day-to-day challenges and prepare for the future.

### Antrim/Ballymena Support Worker:

☎ 028 2588 1708

✉ [antrimballymena@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:antrimballymena@alzheimers.org.uk)

### East Antrim Support Worker:

☎ 028 9336 2940

✉ [eastantrim@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:eastantrim@alzheimers.org.uk)

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## Alzheimer's Society, Carer Information and Support Programme (CrISP)

A structured programme for carers who support someone with a dementia diagnosis. Sessions are offered online and face to face.

☎ 07522 712 764

✉ [crispseni@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:crispseni@alzheimers.org.uk)

## Praxis Care, Dementia Carer Coordinator

Available to advise on community and statutory resources for individuals and families affected by dementia.

☎ 07811 585 823

✉ [tracysmyth@praxiscare.org.uk](mailto:tracysmyth@praxiscare.org.uk)

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## Make the Call

Free government helpline to check eligibility for any benefits and support.

☎ 0800232 1271

🌐 [nidirect.gov.uk](http://nidirect.gov.uk)

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## 'This is Me' Dementia Choir

Come along and enjoy music and singing in a relaxed environment with light refreshments afterwards.

No singing experience necessary.

Free to attend, no need to book.

Come on your own, with friends, family or carers.

The choir meets at the Music Yard, Stylux Business Park, Larne on Wednesdays from 2pm to 3.30pm.

For more information, please contact Alderman Gerardine Mulvenna on

☎ 07970 896 367


## Dementia NI


A member-led charity formed by five individuals living with a diagnosis of dementia.

It was founded to drive positive change for people with dementia through challenging stigma and raising awareness.

Regular events help members to share experiences and offer peer support, with opportunities for families to get involved.

For more information, please visit

 028 9693 1555

 [info@dementiani.org](mailto:info@dementiani.org)

 [dementiani.org](http://dementiani.org)

