



**MOSAIC**

MEANINGFUL OUTREACH & SUPPORT FOR AGING INDIVIDUALS & CAREGIVERS

# CAREGIVERS GUIDE

UNDERSTANDING THE  
TYPES OF

ALZHEIMER'S AND DEMENTIA



# THE FAMILY CAREGIVER'S GUIDE

## UNDERSTANDING THE TYPES OF ALZHEIMER'S AND DEMENTIA

Caring for a loved one experiencing memory loss can feel overwhelming, confusing, and emotionally exhausting—and it's completely normal to feel that way. Learning about the different types of Alzheimer's and dementia is an important first step in providing care that is both informed and compassionate.



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# GUIDE

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This guide is here to support you, helping you understand the variations in these conditions, know what to expect, and discover practical ways to make daily life a little easier—for both you and your loved one.

# WHAT IS DEMENTIA?

Dementia is not a single disease but a term that describes a group of symptoms affecting memory, thinking, and social abilities severely enough to interfere with daily life.

## KEY SYMPTOMS OF DEMENTIA MAY INCLUDE:

- **Memory loss that disrupts daily life**
- **Difficulty planning or solving problems**
- **Challenges with completing familiar tasks**
- **Confusion about time or place**
- **Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships**
- **Problems with speaking or writing**
- **Changes in mood or personality**

## TIP FOR CAREGIVERS

KEEP A SIMPLE DAILY JOURNAL OF YOUR LOVED ONE'S BEHAVIORS AND MEMORY CHANGES. THIS HELPS TRACK PROGRESSION AS YOU COMMUNICATE WITH DOCTORS.





# ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE IS THE MOST COMMON FORM OF DEMENTIA, ACCOUNTING FOR 60–80% OF CASES. IT INVOLVES DAMAGE TO BRAIN CELLS, LEADING TO A GRADUAL DECLINE IN MEMORY, THINKING, AND REASONING.



## STAGES OF ALZHEIMER'S

- **Early stage:** Mild memory loss, getting lost in familiar places, repeating questions.
- **Middle stage:** Increased confusion, difficulty recognizing friends or family, trouble with daily tasks.
- **Late stage:** Severe memory loss, inability to communicate, and need for full-time assistance.

## CAREGIVING TIPS

- USE MEMORY AIDS LIKE CALENDARS, LABELS, AND REMINDERS.
- MAINTAIN A ROUTINE TO REDUCE CONFUSION.
- ENCOURAGE INDEPENDENCE WHERE POSSIBLE BUT PROVIDE HELP WHEN NEEDED.

# VASCULAR DEMENTIA

VASCULAR DEMENTIA IS THE SECOND MOST COMMON TYPE AND IS CAUSED BY REDUCED BLOOD FLOW TO THE BRAIN, OFTEN AFTER A STROKE OR SERIES OF SMALL STROKES. SYMPTOMS MAY APPEAR SUDDENLY AND PROGRESS IN A STEPWISE MANNER.

## COMMON SIGNS



- Confusion or disorientation, particularly after a stroke
- Trouble focusing or organizing thoughts
- Slowed thinking
- Mood changes, including depression or irritability

## CAREGIVING TIPS

- Support heart-healthy habits (balanced diet, exercise, medication adherence).
- Break tasks into smaller steps to reduce frustration.
- Encourage gentle cognitive exercises like puzzles or memory games.





## TIP FOR CAREGIVERS

- BE PATIENT WITH FLUCTUATING ABILITIES; PLAN ACTIVITIES FOR THE MOST ALERT TIMES OF DAY.
- ENSURE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT TO PREVENT FALLS.
- COMMUNICATE CLEARLY AND CALMLY, AS HALLUCINATIONS CAN BE FRIGHTENING.



# LEWY BODY DEMENTIA

Lewy Body Dementia (LBD) is caused by abnormal protein deposits called Lewy bodies in the brain. It shares symptoms with both Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.

## KEY FEATURES

- **Fluctuating alertness and attention**
- **Visual hallucinations**
- **Movement difficulties (rigidity, tremors)**
- **Sleep disturbances**

# FRONTOTEMPORAL DEMENTIA (FTD)

Frontotemporal dementia affects the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain, which control behavior, personality, and language. It often appears earlier than Alzheimer's, typically between ages 45 and 65.

## SYMPTOMS MAY INCLUDE

- Significant changes in personality or behavior
- Difficulty speaking or understanding language
- Impulsive or socially inappropriate actions
- Poor judgment



## CAREGIVING TIPS

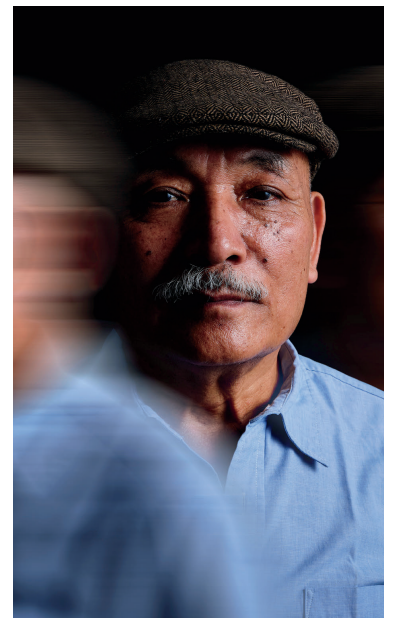
- Set clear, consistent boundaries to manage challenging behaviors.
- Use short, simple sentences when communicating.
- Encourage social engagement in structured settings to reduce isolation.



## LESS COMMON TYPES OF DEMENTIA

- **Parkinson's disease dementia:** Similar to LBD, affecting movement and cognition.
- **Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease:** Rare, rapidly progressive dementia.
- **Normal pressure hydrocephalus:** Memory loss plus walking and bladder control problems.

**Caregiving Tip:** Even rare types benefit from structured routines, patience, and caregiver support networks.





# STRATEGIES FOR DAILY CARE

No matter the type of dementia, certain caregiving strategies can improve quality of life for both the caregiver and your loved one

## COMMUNICATION

- Use simple, clear language.
- Give one instruction at a time.
- Validate feelings rather than arguing about facts.



## ENVIRONMENT

- Keep spaces familiar and safe.
- Reduce clutter and limit background noise.
- Use nightlights to ease nighttime confusion.

## ACTIVITIES

- Encourage activities suited to abilities: folding laundry, gardening, or listening to music.
- Include physical activity like walking to maintain mobility.
- Stimulate the mind with memory games, reading, or art.



## EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

- Join caregiver support groups for guidance and encouragement.
- Take regular breaks to prevent burnout.
- Practice self-care: sleep, nutrition, and stress management are essential.

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Dementia is progressive, and planning ahead can reduce stress:

- Legal and financial planning: Powers of attorney, wills, and insurance.
- Care arrangements: Home modifications, in-home care, or assisted living options.
- Medical care: Regular check-ups, medication management, and advance directives.
- Caregiving Tip: Discuss your loved one's wishes early, while they can still participate in decision-making.

# FINDING SUPPORT

Caregiving doesn't have to be a solitary journey.  
Resources are available:



**REMEMBER: ASKING FOR HELP IS A SIGN OF STRENGTH,  
NOT FAILURE.**

**Alzheimer's Association ([alz.org](https://www.alz.org))**

Information, local support groups, helpline.

**Family Caregiver Alliance ([caregiver.org](https://www.caregiver.org))**

Tips, education, and advocacy.

**Mosaic**

Ask us about local programs, including day programs, support groups, and respite care. Consult our other caregivers guides for help on a variety of topics.

**Caring for someone with Alzheimer's or dementia is a journey unlike any other, and understanding the different types of these conditions can help you provide care that is truly compassionate and personal. Every person's experience is unique, and while the path may have its challenges, a little patience, thoughtful strategies, and support from others can make a meaningful difference. By focusing on daily routines, clear communication, safety, and emotional well-being, you can help your loved one live with dignity and comfort—while also taking care of yourself and nurturing your own strength and resilience along the way.**



*Mosaic Foundation*

THANK  
YOU!

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Seashore Gardens Foundation DBA Mosaic is a trusted nonprofit leader in promoting and enhancing services and programs for the elderly. Its mission is to enrich the quality of life for the aged in Southern New Jersey.

Tax ID #56-424727