

DEPRESSION



Depression is three to four times more common in people with dementia than in older people without dementia.

CAUSES:

- Loss of independence and increasing reliance on others
- Inability to go out alone
- Not being able to do the things previously enjoyed
- Not being able to do everyday tasks
- Physical illness
- Social isolation
- Fatigue
- High anxiety and agitation
- Confusion and loss of memory
- Feeling stressed or worried over issues such as money, relationships or the future
- Environmental factors
- Reaction to event or death
- Symptom of another disorder or disease
- Side effect of medication

SIGNS:

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| • Mood that varies day to day | • Loss of interest in usual hobbies or activities |
| • Loss of interest and enjoyment | • Reduced self-esteem or self-confidence |
| • Feelings of agitation and restlessness | • Aches and pain |
| • Slowed movement and reactions | • Loss of appetite |
| • Lack of energy | • Weight gain or loss |
| • Poor sleep | • Feeling guilty, worthless, hopeless, full of regret |
| • Sleeping more or less than usual | • Thoughts of not wanting to live or of ending one's life |
| • Increased confusion | |
| • Loss of libido | |
| • Constipation | |

DIAGNOSIS

- Discuss the signs of depression with the primary doctor of the person with dementia. Proper diagnosis and treatment can improve sense of well-being and function.

- Diagnosis requires a thorough evaluation by a medical professional. Side effects of medications and some medical conditions can produce similar symptoms to depression.

SOLUTIONS:

- Anti-depressant medication
- Consider taking them to a psychologist, psychiatrist or other trained mental health professional
- Create and maintain daily routine
- Provide reassurance that the person is loved, respected and appreciated
- Incorporate daily exercise
- Reassure the person that he or she will not be abandoned
- Make sure a small amount of time is spent in the sun each day
- Consider getting a pet
- Acknowledge the person's frustration or sadness, while expressing hope that they will feel better soon
- Change the environment around them
- Be positive
- Provide social interactions
- Celebrate small successes
- Consider them joining a support group
- Make a list of activities, people or places that the person receives pleasure from and schedule these things more frequently
- Get the person involved in meaningful and enjoyable activities
- Play music the individual enjoys

Dementia Australia. "Depression and Dementia." Dementia Australia, Dementia Australia, 11 Aug. 2014, www.dementia.org.au/national/support-and-services/carers/behaviour-changes/depression-and-dementia.

"Depression (Major Depressive Disorder)." Mayo Clinic, Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, 3 Feb. 2018, www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/depression/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20356013.

Harvard Health Publishing. "Depression: Early Warning of Dementia? - Harvard Health." Harvard Health Blog, www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/depression-early-warning-of-dementia.