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More than forgetful?

When to consider an assessment?



Forgetfulness or dementia?

We humans have so-called 'cognitive abilities', including memory, attention, orientation and language. These abilities change continuously over the course of our lives. As we get older, it is normal for certain abilities to decline. Sometimes, however, there can also be a very pronounced decrease. The question then arises as to whether we are dealing with a so-called dementia.

There is no need to worry if you occasionally misplace your glasses or are unsure whether you have locked the front door. Although forgetfulness is one of the best-known signs of dementia, it is not usually the only symptom.

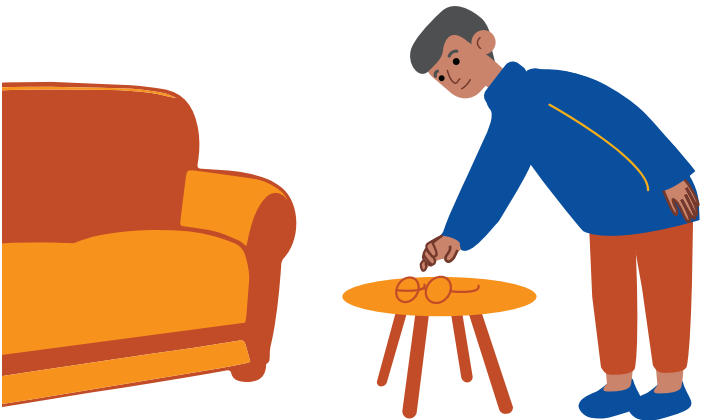
Here are the most important (possible) symptoms of dementia:

- ☐ *Forgetfulness*
- ☐ *Difficulty finding words*
- ☐ *Occasional orientation difficulties*
- ☐ *Reduced drive*
- ☐ *Routine actions become difficult*
- ☐ *Unfamiliar behaviour*
- ☐ *Mistrust*
- ☐ *Misjudgement of people and objects*

Generally, not all of these symptoms will occur. In most cases, one will have to deal with only some of them. Their intensity also varies greatly. Each person affected therefore presents a very individual picture.

How can you tell the difference between age-related forgetfulness and neurocognitive impairment?

Age-related forgetfulness	Neurocognitive impairment
Only temporary , occasional occurrence of forgetfulness	Forgetfulness persists and becomes more frequent over the course of months.
Through intensive thinking or concentration, the person usually remembers what they have forgotten.	The person cannot remember despite intensive thinking.
Occasionally misplacing objects (e.g. glasses, remote control, ...)	Frequent misplacement of things, often in unusual places
The person knows how to help themselves with mnemonic aids (memos, sticky notes).	Sticky notes and memory aids are of no use.
The person can follow verbal or written instructions .	The person cannot follow verbal or written instructions.



Clarification of the anomalies

If you notice possible signs of dementia on yourself, it is advisable to have these symptoms **checked out by your family doctor, geriatrician and/or a neurologist**. Even if such signs appear on someone you know, you should neither try to downplay ('That's normal') nor dramatise, but motivate them to seek a medical examination.

Perhaps the signs are related to **potentially curable causes**. Stress, burnout, lack of nutrients, lack of fluids, craniocerebral trauma or diseases of the thyroid gland and certain brain diseases can be possible causes of such signs.

In principle, they could also be treatable and, in the best case, reversible. Depression and dementia in the early stages are sometimes difficult to distinguish: Both can lead to memory impairment, reduced drive and decision-making ability, misperceptions and social withdrawal.



Some affected individuals do not want a diagnosis and certainly do not want to be labelled with the stigmatising term dementia. That is their right! Nevertheless, a medical assessment is advisable to check whether there is a **reversible cause** for the symptoms observed and whether it can be treated.

Even if it is a case of dementia, early diagnosis is an advantage. Treatment can be initiated at an early stage and the affected person and their relatives have the opportunity to come to terms with the disease and their new life situation.

Under the following link you will find further information (available in German & in French):
demenz.lu/de/vergerslichkeit-demenz-und-mehr/



Do you have questions about forgetfulness or dementia? We are here for you!

Our team offers free counselling with or
without an appointment.

Get in touch with us:

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