



WHAT IS DEMENTIA?

Although dementia is often referred to as a single disease, medically speaking it's a broad term covering a range of different but specific illnesses. In its generalised form it refers to symptoms such as:

- Memory loss
- Confusion when in unfamiliar environments
- Communication and language problems, such as being unable to find the right words
- Difficulty retaining focus or paying attention
- Changes in personality and mood
- Trouble with tasks that require organisation or planning

Not all those with dementia will have all of these symptoms, nor will they have them to the same degree. In most cases, however, the symptoms will get progressively worse as the disease develops.

While many of the symptoms of dementia look like the typical signs of ageing, it's important to know that dementia is more complicated. It's caused by abnormal changes to the brain that trigger a decline in a person's cognitive abilities.

There are over 200 subtypes of dementia, each with its own specific set of causes and sets of symptoms and your medical practitioner will be able to explain more.