

# HIGHBRIDGE HIGHLIGHTS

JULY 2015  
EDITION 1



## About dementia



If you're becoming increasingly forgetful, particularly if you're over the age of 65, it may be a good idea to talk to your GP about the early signs of dementia.

As you get older, you may find that memory loss becomes a problem. It's normal for your memory to be affected by age, stress, tiredness, or certain illnesses and medications. This can be annoying if it happens occasionally, but if it's affecting your daily life or is worrying you or someone you know, you should seek help from your GP.

### How common is dementia?

According to the Alzheimer's Society there are around 800,000 people in the UK with dementia. One in three people over 65 will develop dementia, and two-thirds of people with dementia are women.

The number of people with dementia is increasing because people are living longer. It is estimated that by 2021, the number of people with dementia in the UK will have increased to around 1 million.

**Alzheimer's Society**

Leading the fight against dementia

### What is dementia?

Dementia is a common condition. Your risk of developing dementia increases as you get older, and the condition usually occurs in people over the age of 65.

Dementia is a syndrome (a group of related symptoms) associated with an ongoing decline of the brain and its abilities. This includes problems with:

- memory loss
- thinking speed
- mental agility
- language
- understanding
- judgment

People with dementia can become apathetic or uninterested in their usual activities, and have problems controlling their emotions. They may also find social situations challenging, lose interest in socialising, and aspects of their personality may change.

A person with dementia may lose empathy (understanding and compassion), they may see or hear things that other people do not (hallucinations), or they may make false claims or statements.



As dementia affects a person's mental abilities, they may find planning and organising difficult. Maintaining their independence may also become a problem. A person with dementia will therefore usually need help from friends or relatives, including help with decision making.

Your GP will discuss the possible causes of memory loss with you, including dementia.

Other symptoms can include:

- increasing difficulties with tasks and activities that require concentration and planning
- depression
- changes in personality and mood
- periods of mental confusion
- difficulty finding the right words

Most types of dementia can't be cured, but if it is detected early there are ways you can slow it down and maintain mental function.

### Why is it important to get a diagnosis?

An early diagnosis can help people with dementia get the right treatment and support, and help those close to them to prepare and plan for the future. With treatment and support, many people are able to lead active, fulfilled lives.



We would like to say farewell and thank you to our lovely **Dr Louise Edison** who has is finishing her six months placement as GP Registrar on 4th August. We wish her well.



Welcome **Dr Sally White**, a new GP Registrar to our team, starting in 5th August.

### Somerset Dementia Adviser Service:

Have you received, or are in the process of receiving, a diagnosis of dementia? People with dementia have told us that the most important thing they need after receiving a diagnosis is information:

- what will happen?
- what comes next?
- where can I get the information I want when I need it?
- what support is available for me and for my family?

### Contact the Somerset Dementia Adviser Service.

The service is designed to ensure you get the most out of life by guiding you to all the information you need, not only about your illness but also where to find the most appropriate services in your local area.

Telephone 01458 251541 for further information

### The 'Friends and Family' test

We want to provide you with the best possible service and so would like you to think about your recent experiences of our service. There are forms available in the reception or ask any member of staff to provide you with a form.

**Please complete a Friends & Family test whenever you visit the practice.**

**Sun Awareness:** If you or your child has sunburn, you should get out of the sun as soon as possible - head indoors or into a shady area. You can usually treat mild sunburn at home. The following advice may help to relieve your symptoms until your skin heals:

- \* Cool the skin by sponging it with cold water or by having a cold bath or shower - applying a cold compress such as a cold flannel to the affected area may also help.
- \* Drink plenty of fluids to cool you down and prevent [dehydration](#).
- \* Apply a water-based emollient or petroleum jelly (such as Vaseline) to keep your skin cool and moist.
- \* Take painkillers such as [ibuprofen](#) or [paracetamol](#) to relieve any pain - aspirin should not be given to children under 16.
- \* Try to avoid all sunlight, including through windows, by covering up the affected areas of skin until your skin has fully healed.
- \* Sun Block Care products /AFTER Sun Creams.

Skin care products are available from Pharmacies and Supermarkets and are not prescribed by GP practices.

