

Dementia 101



Normal Forgetfulness from Aging vs. Cognitive Memory Loss

Lots of things can cause normal forgetfulness as we age, like:

- Being too busy and multitasking too many projects
- Not getting enough restful sleep at night
- Depression or anxiety
- Not eating well for an ongoing period
- Chemical interactions from medication or alcohol

Examples of the types of memory loss that should raise concern, and that aren't typically associated with normal aging:

- Putting eyeglasses in the freezer
- Forgetting where the bathroom is in your home
- Forgetting the names of old friends or close family members
- Forgetting major recent events



Dementia vs. Alzheimer's: What's the difference?

- Dementia is an umbrella term for about 70 different types of brain disorders. People with dementia have problems with thinking, memory, and reasoning, and lose the ability to carry out tasks of daily living. They may also experience changes in personality, mood, and behavior.
- Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia with over 70% of dementia cases estimated to be Alzheimer specific.
- On average, a person with dementia lives 4-8 years after diagnosis, but can live as long as 20 years, depending on other factors.
- Today, it's roughly estimated that over 7 million Americans 65 and older are living with dementia, by 2050, this number is expected to increase to nearly 13 million.



Key Symptoms of Dementia:

In general, to be diagnosed with dementia, one would have the following symptoms:

- Memory impairment and one or more of the following:
 - ***Aphasia***- language impairment, both speaking and understanding words
 - ***Apraxia***- difficult doing common tasks
 - ***Agnosia***- inability to identify objects
 - Problems with executive functioning—planning and abstract thought

The Seven Stages of Memory Decline

Stage 1: Normal behavior- no complaints of memory deficit. No impact on Quality of Life. People may experience “senior moments” or “brain fog” which is normal as people age.



The Seven Stages of Memory Decline

Stage 2: Very mild changes- very little to no impact on Quality of Life. You still might not notice any changes in your loved one. You'll see daily memory problems that look like a normal part of aging. You may see:

- Some difficulty finding the right words
- Some mild memory issues, but high functioning, and you may see the person develop strategies to compensate for memory lapses--cover up techniques
- The person will still exhibit normal functioning in the home, community, workplace. The person will still be able to carry on their normal responsibilities and functions.
- For this stage, what is important is to watch for new signs of memory decline. Be aware of any changes to the baseline of functioning and managing day to day. As with every stage, it's very important to be open and honest with what you or your loved one is experiencing and to discuss how to address any challenges.



The Seven Stages of Memory Decline

Stage 3: Mild Cognitive Decline/MCI - very little impact on quality of life. You will likely start to notice changes in your loved ones' thinking and reasoning. You also will see some memory loss. You may see your loved one:

- Show signs of forgetfulness, such as losing an item and not being able to retrace steps to find it.
- Tendency to get lost when traveling to unfamiliar places
- Less retention of things that are said or heard
- Trouble paying attention all the time
- Decreased ability to plan or organize
- Decreased performance in work and social settings
- Denial of having a problem begins



The Seven Stages of Memory Decline

Stage 3: Mild Cognitive Decline/MCI (cont.)

- **What is important at this stage:** At this stage, it is important to help your loved one in organizing their appointments. You may need to assist or even take over bill payment and financial management. You will want to manage your loved one's medication to ensure the right medicine is being taken at the right time at the right dosage. It will be important to have all legal and financial management documents in order, if they are not already. Often at this stage it's encouraged that driving be minimized to very basic, familiar routes.



The Seven Stages of Memory Decline

Stage 4: Moderate Changes/Mild Dementia—early stages of dementia.

Your loved one will remember all or most of his or her past and will recognize loved ones. You may see your loved one:

- Forget familiar words and names of items
- Forget where things were left, like eyeglasses or key/phone
- Have some trouble with daily tasks such as laundry, cooking, shopping
- Decreased ability to handle finances or food preparation
- Increased difficulties with problem solving

What is important at this stage: At this stage, your loved one should no longer be driving and will need help with some everyday tasks.



The Seven Stages of Memory Decline

Stage 5-7: Moves from Moderate to Severe Dementia- Your loved one will show increasing challenges in the following areas:

- Show strong personality changes and mood swings
- Have delusions, such as thinking they are still working
- May wander and become lost
- Difficulty speaking
- Bladder problems
- Have problems sleeping at night but sleep long stretches during the day

What is important here and how you can help: Your loved one will need ongoing support for the activities of daily living like bathing, dressing, meal prep and eating, toileting and potentially mobility support.



Different Types of Dementia

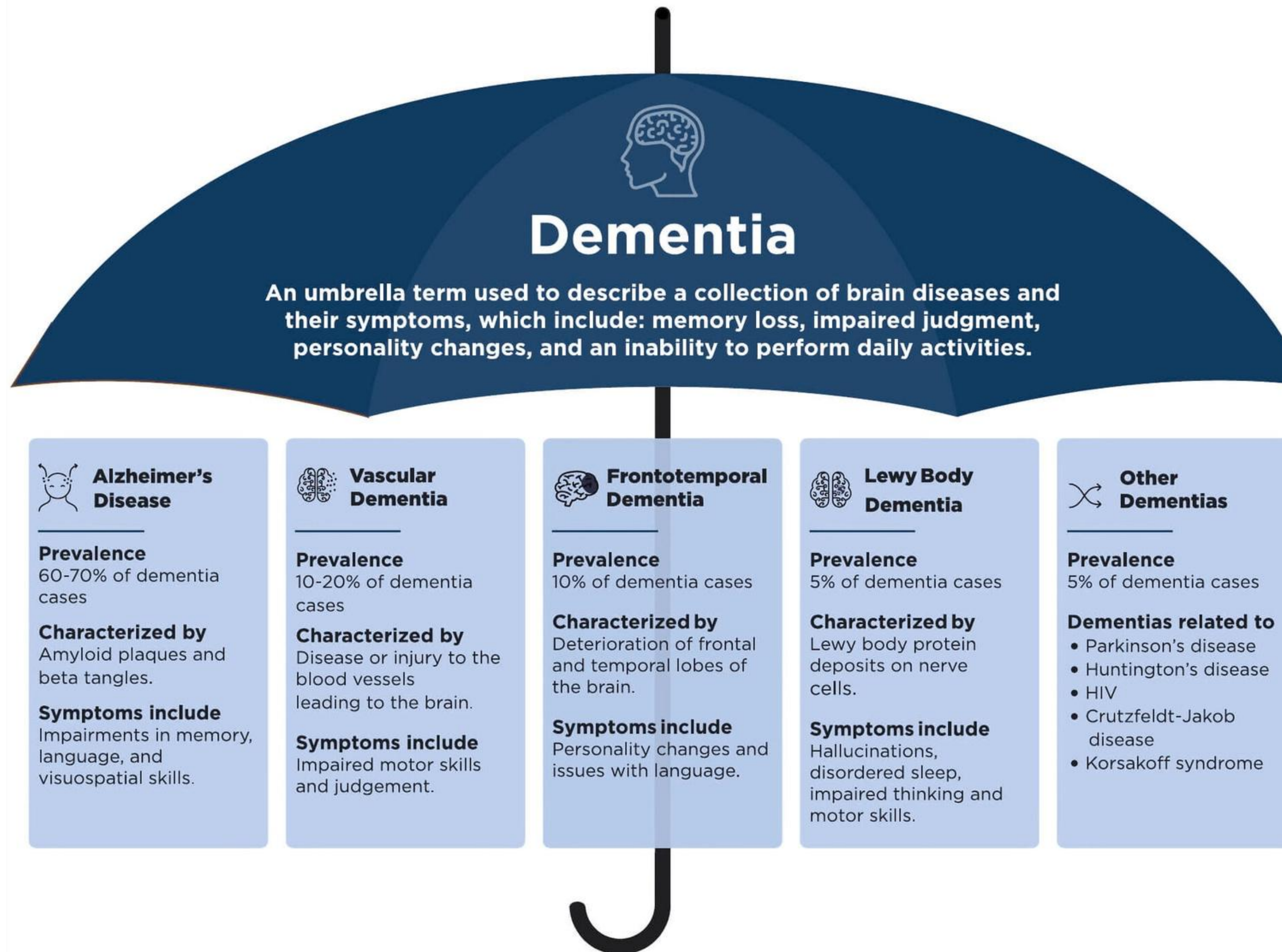
- **Alzheimer's:** Makes up over 70% of all dementia cases today, and 2/3 of these cases are women. Alzheimer symptoms typically start with memory loss (recent events), apathy, and impaired judgment.
- **Vascular Dementia** is the second most common form and represents between 10-20% of cases of dementia. It occurs due to problems with the blood supply to the brain, which can result from conditions like strokes, high blood pressure, and diabetes. People with vascular dementia have problems with planning, judgment, or experience a "stepwise" decline (sudden drops in function) rather than gradual memory loss.



Different Types of Dementia

- **Lewy Body Dementia (LBD):** Makes up roughly 5% of dementia cases. Studies consistently show that men are at a greater risk for developing this type compared to women.
 - Men: More likely to have movement issues ([parkinsonism](#)) and dream-acting-out (REM sleep behavior disorder).
 - Women: May experience more visual hallucinations or delusions and are often underdiagnosed or misdiagnosed, sometimes as Alzheimer's.
- **Frontotemporal Dementia (FTD):** Makes up about 10% of total cases. It is an umbrella term for a group of brain diseases that primarily affect the frontal and temporal brain lobes. Early symptoms include prominent changes in behavior (impulsivity, apathy, social inappropriateness) or severe language loss, often without significant early memory loss.





Questions?

Thank you!

Please reach out if you are interested in a consultation!

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