

Signs and Symptoms of Dementia

Great Oaks Management

What is Dementia?

- * Dementia is a general term for a decline in mental ability severe enough to interfere with daily living.
- * Dementia is not a specific disease, it is an overall term used to describe the changes in mental ability that affect daily living/functioning.
- * Alzheimer's Disease is the cause of 60-80% of all dementia.
- * Vascular dementia is the second most common cause, often after a stroke or severe coronary artery disease.

Symptoms of Dementia

- * While symptoms may vary, at least 2 of the following must be present to warrant a diagnosis of Dementia:
 - * Memory loss/problems—short term memory
 - * Communication and language difficulties
 - * Ability to focus and pay attention
 - * Reasoning and judgment
 - * Visual perception

What is Memory Loss?

- * Forgetting recently learned information
- * Forgetting important dates or information
- * Asking the same questions over and over
- * Relying on family to remind us of things we used to do on our own
- * Getting lost while driving or out shopping

Communication/Language Problems

- * Trouble following or joining a conversation
- * Stopping in the middle of a conversation, unable to complete thought
- * Can't find the right word
- * Calling common items by the wrong name (a watch may be called a hand clock)

Ability to Focus or Pay Attention

- * Difficulty staying focused on a conversation
- * Difficulty paying attention to TV, Movie
- * Having problems following a discussion or conversation
- * Having problems understanding what is said

Reasoning and Judgment

- * Giving things of value away
- * Making poor decisions
- * Paying less attention to grooming or clothes selection
- * Not taking care of things that have always been valued by the individual

Visual Perception

- * Difficulty reading
- * Difficulty judging distance or color
- * Not recognizing their own image when passing a mirror, thinking someone else is in the room

Diagnosis and Early Intervention

- * If you have a loved one who is experiencing symptoms of dementia, it is critical to get a diagnosis and begin early intervention.
- * Lots of new medications which can slow the progress of some forms of dementia
- * Allows other non medical interventions to be more effective
- * Allows for planning and getting individuals desires and needs for long term care known