

# Dementia, Diagnosis and Support Services



NDIS support coordination and Home Care Packages available to help you get the right assistance

## What is dementia?

There are **different types of dementia**, which can be caused by different illnesses. 'Dementia' is the name given to the shared symptoms of these illnesses, and these symptoms affect a person's memory, thoughts, and mood, often worsening over time.

Dementia is more common in people over 60 years old, but it is not considered a 'normal' part of ageing. People in their 30s to 60s can get dementia, which is called **younger onset dementia**.

The illnesses responsible for dementia can cause other symptoms and health problems that aren't seen in all types of dementia. For example, those with Parkinson's disease will have problems moving their body, tremors (shaking), stiffness, and trouble speaking.

Dementia has a significant effect on people with this condition. People suffering dementia may become dependent on others to perform basic tasks, and may behave very differently to the way they did before symptoms began. This means dementia also has a big impact on the lives of families and carers.

Getting diagnosed early makes it easier to get the right home support services and **home care packages** supports in place.

## Signs and diagnosis

The **early signs of dementia** can appear over months or years, and be difficult to notice. Family and friends of people with dementia are often the first to notice symptoms.

Early signs include:

- memory loss that is **different to common memory issues**
- confusion — this can apply to many things, from getting lost in familiar places to having trouble holding a conversation
- difficulty talking, or not making sense when talking
- changes in personality or mood swings
- not being able to do basic tasks anymore
- losing interest in things you used to enjoy

Contact a doctor if you have noticed two or more of the **ten warning signs of dementia**. Getting diagnosed early means you can receive the appropriate supports, as well as treatment for other conditions which might be causing dementia symptoms.

Diagnosing dementia involves tests which aim to rule out other possible causes of the symptoms of dementia, such as infections, psychiatric conditions, or other brain disorders. These tests can also identify what type of dementia you might have and how it might impact your life. These may be used to ensure you receive the most suitable NDIS support coordination and assistance. Tests might include taking blood, x-rays and other scans, as well as memory, thought-process and other mental assessments.

It is a good idea to **find a doctor** for regular check-ins, and who can support you long-term.

If you are a carer of someone who has symptoms of dementia, they might not want to see a doctor. It is common for people to ignore early symptoms of dementia, or to refuse treatment. Contact your doctor or the **National Dementia Helpline** on 1800 100 500 for advice on how to encourage someone to see a doctor for dementia symptoms.

## Treatment, services and support

Being diagnosed with dementia can be overwhelming for you, your family and carers. There are a range of aged care services available to support you and to help treat the conditions and managing symptoms that may affect your daily life.

If you are under 65 years old and have been diagnosed with dementia, you can apply for access to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The NDIS funds disability-related **supports and services**. Find out who to contact about the **NDIS where you live**.

If you or the person you are caring for is over 65 years of age, you can **apply for an Aged Care Assessment**. This will connect you with the **type of care** you need to keep going about your daily life.

It is also important for carers to receive assistance in order to continue caring for their loved ones. Carer supports are available through **government support programs**, the NDIS for **carers of NDIS participants**, and the **Carer Gateway** support network.

Dementia support organisations also provide information and services for people with dementia, their families and carers. Visit **Dementia Australia**, **Younger Onset Dementia Australia**, and **Dementia Support Australia** to find out more.

Coming to terms with a dementia diagnosis can be mentally and emotionally difficult for you, and your family and carers. Contact your doctor to discuss getting a **mental health treatment plan**, or call the Dementia Hotline on 1800 100 500 for dementia counselling and helpful information about **living with dementia**.

## How Claro can support you

At Claro, we provide **disability and allied health services** that we tailor to your needs, as well as offering advice on the most appropriate home care packages. Whether you need assistance with daily tasks like shopping and transport, or supports that mean you can stay in your own home, we will work with you to provide the right assistance.

We also partner with **Plena Healthcare** to provide allied health services. These services can help manage the symptoms and effects of dementia long-term. They include nursing supports, occupational and physiotherapy, speech pathology, dietetics, and podiatry.

You might want assistance managing your new supports. If you are an NDIS participant and have funding for **Support Coordination** in your plan, our experienced and knowledgeable **Support Coordinators** can work with you to connect you to the services you need.

Fill out our **enquiry form** and we will contact you to talk about the options.

## Resources

- **Dementia, Health Direct**
- **Dementia, Better Health Channel Victoria**
- **Dementia Snapshot 2020, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare**
- **Dementia Australia**
- **Younger Onset Dementia Hub, Dementia Australia**
- **Dementia Support Australia**
- **Understanding the NDIS**
- **Applying to access the NDIS**
- **My Aged Care**
- **Carer Gateway**



## Contact details

Claro Aged Care and Disability Services

Find us at [claro.com.au](http://claro.com.au)  
Call us on 1300 303 770