

Mental Health Carers Service Information & Advice Sheets

Younger People With Dementia

Although the symptoms of dementia may be similar whatever a person's age, younger people may have different needs and their problems require a different approach

Types of dementia in younger people

Only around one-third of younger people with dementia have Alzheimer's disease. Other common forms of dementia in younger people are:

- Vascular dementia, which occurs when the blood vessels in the brain are deprived of oxygen
- Fronto-temporal dementia, including Pick's disease. This is caused by damage to parts of the brain that control behaviour, emotions and language
Dementia with Lewy bodies, which is caused by the build-up of tiny protein deposits in the brain
- Alcohol-related brain impairment, which is often called Korsakoff's syndrome and can occur in people who have regularly consumed a large amount of alcohol. It is caused by a lack of thiamine (vitamin B1) in the body, which affects the brain and nervous system
- Rarer forms of dementia such as prion disease (eg CJD), or inherited conditions that can cause dementia (eg CADASIL). Around one-fifth of younger people with dementia have a rarer form of the condition.

People with other conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis or Huntington's disease, may also develop dementia as part of their illness. People with Down's syndrome and other learning disabilities can also develop dementia at an early age.

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Types of dementia in younger people continued...

Most people think of dementia as a condition affecting only older people. However, dementia can affect anyone, at any age. There is little awareness or understanding of people who develop dementia at an early age, which can make it very difficult for them to get proper support.