

Early Signs of Dementia Checklist

As your loved one ages, it's important to watch for warning signs of dementia. Use this checklist to distinguish emerging signs of dementia from normal aging. An early dementia diagnosis may help your loved one play a role in determining their future and help them to receive better support overall.



Behavioral changes

Y ☐ N ☐ Is the person in your care experiencing a dramatic shift in personality?

Y ☐ N ☐ Have they become unusually apathetic, depressed, or anxious?

Y ☐ N ☐ Is your loved one experiencing uncharacteristic episodes of anger, aggression, or violence?

Y ☐ N ☐ Are they experiencing hallucinations, delusions, or paranoia?

Note: Fluctuating emotions are a normal part of life, but a sudden change in personality is a cause for alarm. Hallucinations, delusions, and paranoia are not typically seen in normal aging.

Memory challenges

Y ☐ N ☐ Does the person in your care have difficulty with learning new information or following directions?

Y ☐ N ☐ Does your loved one find it challenging to recall the names of family members or struggle to remember things they used to know with ease?

Y ☐ N ☐ Does your family member struggle to remember what they just read in a book or newspaper?

Y ☐ N ☐ Does your loved one wander away from home or frequently become lost in familiar surroundings?

Note: Some memory loss may be normal with age, but excessive memory loss should be a cause for concern. Vision deficits may make reading more challenging physically, but vision problems should not affect reading comprehension.

Performing normal tasks

- Y ☐ N ☐ Does your loved one struggle with [activities of daily living](#) (ADLs)?
- Y ☐ N ☐ Is your family member having a difficult time maintaining their hygiene?
- Y ☐ N ☐ Does the person in your care frequently miss payment or other deadlines?
- Y ☐ N ☐ Do they spend money recklessly without regard to their budget?

Note: It's normal for some tasks to become more difficult with age, but your loved one should be able to follow directions within reason and perform ADLs. A loved one forgetting to pay a bill or going over budget once in a while may not be a reason to worry.

Social Life

- Y ☐ N ☐ Has your loved one stopped visiting with friends or doing activities that they have loved for years?
- Y ☐ N ☐ Has your family member stopped following accepted social norms?
- Y ☐ N ☐ Does the person in your care struggle to interpret emotional and social cues when interacting with others?
- Y ☐ N ☐ Do they lack self-awareness or act in an uncharacteristically insensitive or inappropriate manner to others?

Note: It's normal for people's social and activity preferences to shift as they age, but withdrawing from social life or significant emotional and social changes should be further investigated.

Please list any other concerns you have:

What do I do if my loved one has early dementia symptoms?

If you feel that your loved one may be showing any early warning signs of dementia mentioned on this checklist, you should encourage them to be evaluated by a medical professional. Your loved one may invite you to accompany them to their dementia evaluation. You can support your loved one by learning [how to talk to their doctor](#), tracking their symptoms, and by taking notes at the appointment.

In the event that your family member is diagnosed with dementia, you should start planning for their care in the future. Reach out to a [Senior Living Advisor](#) at A Place for Mom. Check out www.aplaceformom.com to view the [memory care options](#) in your area. If you prefer to speak over the phone, call 1-866-206-4767.