

Living with dementia on the North Coast



HEALTHY
NORTH COAST

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An Australian Government Initiative

Healthy North Coast Limited
ABN 18 154 252 132
PO Box 957 Ballina NSW 2478

hnc.org.au

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Learning to live with dementia and steps on the journey

If you have recently been diagnosed with dementia, there is a lot of information and resources out there to help. While everyone's journey will be different, following Steps 1-5 in particular in the first six months after your diagnosis, can help you to plan ahead.

Steps on the journey

Step 1. Who can I talk with?

Step 2. Working with your local health teams

Step 3. Getting around

Step 4. Planning your future

Step 5. Staying healthy and active

Step 6. Staying safe

Step 7. Adapting as your health changes

Acknowledgement of Country

Healthy North Coast acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands across our region and pays respect to the Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise these lands were never ceded and acknowledge the continuation of culture and connection to land, sky and sea. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Peoples and honour the rich diversity of the world's oldest living cultures.

What is dementia - how does it feel?

Dementia is a collection of symptoms affecting the brain. Over time, this can interfere with your normal social or working life and daily routines. Many people become affected by dementia, not just in Australia but around the world. Although you feel like it sometimes, you are not alone.

Learning to live with dementia is a journey. It is important for you and your family to understand dementia and prepare early for the health changes to come.

For many, finding out you or your loved one has dementia can trigger feelings like disbelief, shock, anger or sadness. Some people may feel relief that they now know what is happening to cause the symptoms. This information booklet is your guide to the dementia journey.

It starts with information about dementia and how people diagnosed with dementia and their families might feel. It then takes you to a number of steps along the way, which can be challenging, enjoyable and even exhausting.

To help manage your journey we provide you with local contacts and services to assist you. Remember, life is about the journey, not the destination, and dementia is no different.

There are many ways to live positively with dementia.

Find out more about dementia

Help sheets from Dementia Australia provide information on dementia, how it feels and ways to help.

About dementia:

www.dementia.org.au/about-dementia

About your feelings and adjusting to change:

www.dementia.org.au/living-dementia/what-next-after-your-diagnosis/coping-your-diagnosis

Contact:

www.dementia.org.au/get-support/national-dementia-helpline

Or take a look at the dementia guide:

www.dementia.org.au/get-support/dementia-guide

Most Dementia Australia internet pages have drop-down boxes to translate the information into another language.

If you don't have access to the internet, phone the National Dementia Helpline and ask for copies of the help sheets and the Dementia Guide to be mailed to you.

Ph: 1800 100 500



Step 1.

Who can I talk with?

There are a range of services you can talk with by phone or face-to-face.

Who can I talk with by phone?

Dementia Australia

Dementia Australia is a national organisation that can provide you with support, counselling, education, links to services, advocacy and information. Their post-diagnosis support service can help you understand the condition and plan for the future.

The National Dementia Helpline operates anytime of the day or night, even on public holidays.

Ph: **1800 100 500**

www.dementia.org.au

If you require the assistance of an interpreter, please call the **Translating and Interpreting Service**:

Ph: **131 450**

If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment, please call the **National Relay Service** and request a copy of the Dementia Guide. This guide is a comprehensive booklet to help you and your family understand your diagnosis better and plan for the future.

Ph: **1800 020 105**

www.accesshub.gov.au/about-the-nrs/nrs-call-numbers-and-links

Healthdirect

Provides 24-hour health advice.

Ph: **1800 022 222**

www.healthdirect.gov.au

For families and carers

Carer Gateway (for family carers)

If you care for a family member or friend, then Carer Gateway could help you. Support for carers includes - planning, counselling, peer support, tailored support packages and respite services, emergency respite.

Ph: 1800 422 737

www.carergateway.gov.au

Carers NSW

Also provides carer information and support.

Ph: 02 9280 4744

www.carersnsw.org.au

Who can I talk with face-to-face?

Mid North Coast

Dementia support specialists can provide support for you and help you link into other services, such as family carer support groups and café connect. They also help with education, counselling and individual support.

Dementia Australia local offices:

Coffs Harbour

Ph: 02 6278 8902

(Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays)

Port Macquarie

Ph: 02 6584 7444

(Your call may be diverted to a Dementia Australia phone operator so ask for the Port Macquarie office)

Northern Rivers

NNSW LHD Dementia Outreach Service (DOS):

This service consists of specialist health workers who can advocate for you through the diagnosis of dementia and provide education, online groups, support groups, referrals and linkages to other services.

Clarence Valley, Richmond Valley, Tweed Valley

Ph: 02 6620 6274

These services are not means-tested and many aspects of them are free.

To access these services, you will need a referral through My Aged Care. Dementia Australia/ DOS staff will talk to you about the services they offer and help with the My Aged Care referral. See Step 4 for more help with My Aged Care.

My Aged Care Ph: 1800 200 422

www.myagedcare.gov.au

Where can I go online?

Forward with dementia

Forward with dementia is a government-funded website that can guide you for the first year after diagnosis.

You'll find up-to-date information from clinicians and researchers, practical suggestions and stories from people living with dementia and their carers, and tools to help you come to terms and live positively with dementia.

www.forwardwithdementia.au

University of Tasmania

The University of Tasmania runs online education sessions for people in the early stages of dementia, their families and anyone interested in learning more about dementia.

www.utas.edu.au/wicking/understanding-dementia

Dementia Training Australia

Improving the health and wellbeing of people living with dementia and the staff who support them.

Ph: 1300 229 092
<https://dta.com.au/>

"What a difference in knowing there was support out there!"

Carer, Northern Rivers



Step 2.

Working with your local health team

Your GP and other local health teams can help you along your journey with dementia.

General practice

Having a regular GP can help you manage dementia.

Below is a list of common questions you might like to ask your GP or practice nurse. This does not have to be done all in one appointment. In fact, it will be better to ask for three or four long consults and ask a few of your most pressing questions at each appointment.

If you can, take a family member with you and write down the answers to these questions.

What does this diagnosis mean?

Can I reduce my risk for developing dementia?

Are there any treatments/medications available?

Can I take over-the-counter medications as well?

How should we plan for the future? For example, with an advance care directive, an enduring power of attorney, enduring guardianships, wills? Where will I live?

Can I still drive?

How might dementia affect my work life now and in the future?

What are the risks for people living with dementia?

What support is available for me and my carer?

How can I keep as healthy as possible - mentally, physically and socially?

What is a GP Chronic Condition Management Plan? Do I need one?

Should I have a pharmacist home medication review?

Should I get a referral to a specialist?
What supports are there for families?
How frequently do I need to see my GP?
When is my next appointment?

Other local health services

Other local services may be able to help. Talk to your GP to get the right referrals for you.

Geriatricians

A geriatrician can help with diagnosis, specialist medications, capacity testing for signing legal documents and local service knowledge. Currently geriatricians are based in Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie, Lismore, Tweed Heads and the Gold Coast. There is also a geriatric telehealth option through Geriatric Care Australia.

www.geriatriccareaustralia.com.au

Psychogeriatric service

This is a specialist community service that provides assessment, interim care coordination, education and support for older people who are having issues with maintaining mental health. This can include anxiety, depression, paranoia, hoarding or hallucinations. This NSW Health service is available in Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour, and through a telehealth clinic in Pottsville.

mnclhd.health.nsw.gov.au/aged-care-services/psychogeriatric-service/

A Psychogeriatric Nurse Practitioner based in NNSWLHD Grafton/ Maclean

nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/community-health/iluka-community-health/community-nursing

Psychogeriatric Clinical Nurse Consultant that works across the NNSWLHD Richmond Network

nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/community-health/lismore-community-health/community-nursing

NNSWLHD Older Persons Mental Health Services

nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/services/mental-health-services

Mental Health Line 1800 011 511

There are two Acute Adult Inpatient Mental Health Units, one in Tweed Heads and one in Lismore. There is one Sub-Acute Adult Inpatient Mental Health Unit in Byron Bay. There is one Adolescent Mental Health Inpatient Unit, and one Older Persons Mental Health Inpatient Unit, both in Lismore.

Neurologists

These specialists can help with diagnosing conditions with the brain, spinal cord and nerves.

Dr Ruaridh Cameron Smail

Ph: 0481 590 448

www.northernriversneuro.com.au

Allied health professionals

Occupational therapists, physiotherapists, dietitians, speech pathologists, audiologists, exercise physiologists, psychologists and counsellors can help make life at home easier and suggest ways to improve your fitness and healthy living.

Complementary therapies

Complementary therapies such as music therapy, art and gardening, can help improve quality of life and enjoyment.

Palliative care practitioners

Palliative care specialists and teams provide care to people as they approach end-of-life, particularly if they have complex needs, such as pain or nausea. Palliative care teams also provide support and advice to clinicians such as GPs.

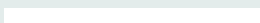
Ph: (02) 6620 2967

Email: NNSWLHD-Richmond-PalliativeCommunity@health.nsw.gov.au

nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/community-health/pottsville-healthone/palliative-care

On your journey

Before moving on to *Step 3 Getting around*, take a break and have a rest stop!





Step 3. Getting around

Driving for many older people is important to their way of life and represents independence. Over time, however, having dementia will affect your ability to drive. The changes will make it difficult to judge distances and the speed you are travelling, putting you and the people around you at risk of injury.

Steps to take

Medical conditions, like dementia, as well as illnesses and injuries, can affect your driver licence.

Here's what you need to know to drive safely in NSW.

www.nsw.gov.au/driving-boating-and-transport/driver-and-rider-licences/health-conditions-and-disability/fitness-to-drive/medical-conditions-illness-and-injuries

You must notify Transport for NSW of a medical condition or recent surgery affecting your ability to drive safely. Notify Transport by:

Ph: 13 22 13

Email: medicalunit@transport.nsw.gov.au

Services NSW

Ph: 13 77 88 (Monday to Friday 7am - 7pm)

www.service.nsw.gov.au/service-centre

Other transport options

There are other ways to get around and stay active in the community.

Taxi subsidy scheme

Through Services NSW, eligible people can obtain discounts on taxi fares.

Ph: 13 77 88 (Monday to Friday 7am - 7pm)

www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/apply-for-the-taxi-transport-subsidy-scheme

Community transport schemes and other community services

These can be found through My Aged Care and can provide transport to appointments, shopping and social activities.

Aged Care Services

If you receive services under My Aged Care, for example Support at Home, ask your service provider about transport for shopping, appointments or leisure.

Family and friends may be able to help with transport

Give family and friends the opportunity to provide you with practical help and chat to them about if and when they are available to help you get around.



Step 4. Planning your future

Another important activity after you receive your diagnosis is to plan for your future with your family.

Planning ahead

Planning for your future means you need to put in place all your legal protections, register with My Aged Care or the NDIS if under 65 years old, and have discussions with your GP and family about what you want at the end of your life. This may feel too soon for some people. You may be able to put in place some of the suggestions outlined below, but not all which is fine. Do what you can - it is important for you to voice what you want and to plan for the future.

Legal protections

Support with wills

Everyone should have a will. Having a will is the only way you can ensure that when you die, your estate will be distributed according to your wishes. Speak to a local solicitor or contact Service NSW. Keep in mind that legal safeguards vary depending on each state.

www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/noindex/2024-08/NSW-trustee-guardian-wills-estate-planning-guide.pdf

www.nsw.gov.au/family-and-relationships/planning-for-end-of-life/learn-about-wills

Enduring Power of Attorney

An enduring power of attorney gives someone you trust legal powers to look after your finances if you can no longer do so. It is important for your power of attorney to:

understand all of your accounts, including superannuation and be signed up as a co-signatory.

understand any pensions you receive and be signed up with Service Australia as a co-signatory so they can legally support you to manage all of your financial matters.

talk to a solicitor or speak to Service NSW.

Enduring Guardianship

This allows someone you trust to make decisions about health and lifestyle for you if you can no longer make these decisions. Talk to a solicitor or speak to Service NSW.

Advance Care Directive

This written plan sets out the types of treatment and medical care you would want in the future. Talk to your doctor about having one prepared. These web resources can help you plan for the future.

Ph: 02 9391 9000

www.health.nsw.gov.au/patients/acp/Pages/acd-form-info-book.aspx

www.dementia.org.au/living-dementia/what-next-after-your-diagnosis/planning-ahead

NSW Trustee and Guardian

NSW Trustee and Guardian has local offices and pop-up clinics to complete enduring powers of attorney and enduring guardianship. Fees do apply for managing estates and can be found on the link below.

www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/trustee-guardian/about-us/our-fees

Set up a binding beneficiary and decide what happens to your super

Superannuation does not automatically form part of your will. To ensure your funds are distributed exactly as you wish, you must formally nominate a beneficiary with your super fund. Without a nomination, the fund's trustee holds the discretion to decide who receives your death benefit, which may cause delays.

www.csc.gov.au/Members/resources/how-super-works/when-life-happens/making-life-easier

Support to live

For people over 65 years or 50 years if you are Aboriginal

My Aged Care

Register with My Aged Care as soon as possible to be assessed for services that can assist you. My Aged Care offers advice and resources about local aged care services that can support you to live well in your home and in the community. It is important to register early as some services can take up to six months or more to access.

You can call the contact centre for free on Monday to Friday, from 8am to 8pm, and on Saturdays from 10am to 2pm. The centre is closed on Sundays and national public holidays. Tell them you would like referrals to the local Dementia Australia service or Dementia Outreach Service and they will arrange an assessment to link you to these and other services.

Ph: 1800 200 422

www.myagedcare.gov.au

Services Australia

Aged Care Specialist Officers are located in Services Australia offices in Ballina, Coffs Harbour, Grafton, Lismore, Nambucca, Port Macquarie, Tweed Heads and Yamba. They can help you with the My Aged Care process and financial planning for aged care services. Office hours are Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm to book a face-to-face or virtual appointment.

My Aged Care will arrange an aged care needs assessment to understand your circumstances, goals and support needs. It can take some time for this to happen, so start this part of the journey as soon as possible after diagnosis.

Ph: 1800 227 475

www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/aged-care-specialist-officer-my-aged-care-face-to-face-services?context=55715

For people under 65 years

While the majority of people who are living with dementia are over 65, people under 65 can also be affected. Help is available through Dementia Australia, the Dementia Alliances in Port Macquarie and Ballina, and the Northern Rivers Dementia Outreach Service. Their contact details are in this booklet. Help is also available through the NDIS.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

The NDIS can provide all people with disability with information and connections to services in their communities, as well as information about what support is provided by each state and territory government.

Ph: 1800 800 110

Email: enquiries@ndis.gov.au

www.ndis.gov.au

For war veterans

Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA)

If you are a veteran, DVA may be able to assist with in-home support, nursing services and respite care.

You can call DVA between 8:00am and 5:00pm, Monday to Friday.

Ph: 1300 550 450

www.dva.gov.au/what-we-help-with/care-at-home-and-aged-care-services/living-independently/dva-in-home-programs/veterans-home-care-vhc

End-of-life planning

When you are ready, it is important to talk to your family and GP about your end-of-life choices. Making your wishes known will allow your family to support your choices when you are not able to communicate what you want.

These discussions can include what kind of care and treatment you would like at the end of life, as well as where you would like to die. If you are unsure how to have these discussions, the *What Matters to Me: Conversation Guide* and the *Palliative Care Australia discussion starter series* may be helpful.

www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/what-matters-to-me-conversation-guide?language=en

www.palliativecare.org.au/campaign/discussion-starters/

The teams who can guide you with this decision include your GP or practice nurse and your aged care or local palliative care service. Your team will discuss with you about the choice of dying at home, in a palliative care unit or in a residential aged care home.

Voluntary Assisted Dying

Voluntary assisted dying means an eligible person can ask for medical help to end their life. The person must have an advanced and progressive disease, illness, or medical condition that is expected to cause their death within six months (or 12 months for neurodegenerative diseases such as motor neurone disease). They must also be experiencing suffering that can't be relieved in a way that is acceptable to them.

www.health.nsw.gov.au/voluntary-assisted-dying/Pages/default.aspx

Local palliative care services

These services work in the community and are based out of the local hospitals or community health centres.

Port Macquarie
Ph: 02 6589 2100
Wauchope
Ph: 02 6580 8060
Kempsey
Ph: 02 6561 2990
Macksville
Ph: 02 6598 3300
Bellingen
Ph: 02 6659 5842

Coffs Harbour
Ph: 02 6656 7820
Grafton
Ph: 02 6641 8200
Lismore
Ph: 02 6620 2967
Murwillumbah
Ph: 02 6670 9400
Tweed Heads
Ph: 02 6676 9000

Hastings / Macleay Nightingale Program

Based in the Dementia Australia office in Port Macquarie, this model of palliative care provides a specialist nursing service free of charge to support people living with advanced dementia. They can provide strategies and advice for the person and their families focussing on promoting choice, well-being and forward planning.

To find out more or to access this service call the National Dementia helpline

Ph: 1800 100 500

Private services

These private services offer accommodation and care at the end of life.

Wedgetail Retreat, Dulguigan
Ph: 02 6672 8459
www.tweedpalliativesupportandwedgetailretreat.com/
Honey Bee Homes, Coorabell
Ph: 02 8088 0773
Email: Hello@honeybeehomes.com.au

Dementia Doula
Gin Beaufort
Phone: 0400 19 72 72
Email: gin@rainbowregiondementiadoula.com.au
www.rainbowregiondementiadoula.com.au

Aged care homes

If you are considering a residential aged care home, My Aged Care provides a list of homes in your local area. It is also helpful to talk to an accountant or the Services Australia Aged Care Specialist Officers about financial considerations when moving into an aged care home. Phone Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm to book a face-to-face or virtual appointment.

Ph: 1800 227 475
www.myagedcare.gov.au/find-a-provider

Financial support

Financial supports can be found through Services Australia. This might include a carers payment instead of an aged care pension for families providing care. The carers allowance provides a weekly or fortnightly payment to carers. Contact Services Australia to find out if you are eligible and what supports can assist you. They are open Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm.

Ph: 132 717

www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/ageing

A group of people, including several older adults, are walking away from the camera on a wooden boardwalk that leads from a grassy dune area down to a sandy beach. The ocean is visible in the background under a clear sky. The scene is bathed in the warm light of late afternoon or early morning.

Step 5. Staying healthy and active

An important way to look after your health throughout your journey (whether you are living with dementia or are a family member) is to stay socially active. One way is to be with other people living the journey as well. There are many local groups available.

Join an alliance group

Dementia Friendly Community Alliance (Port Macquarie)

The Dementia Friendly Community (DFC) Alliance is made up of people living with dementia and family carers, along with enthusiastic volunteers and members of the community. Representatives from businesses, social groups, churches, local and state government, service organisations and aged care services have all come together to help provide solutions to the challenges of living with dementia.

Dementia-friendly communities focus on improving the community inclusion and quality of life for people living with dementia.

 www.dementiafriendlypmq.com.au

Dementia Inclusive Ballina Alliance

The Dementia Inclusive Ballina Alliance is a not-for-profit community organisation working with the community to take action to improve the lives of people living with dementia and their carers.

The Alliance facilitates an activity program each Wednesday from 10:30am to 12:30pm at The Ballina Aeroclub for people living with dementia and their advocates. The cost is \$5 for members and \$7.50 for non-members.

They also facilitate a 'Dementia Café' on the second Monday of the month at Café Sebastian, Ballina Fair between 10am and 12pm.

dementiainclusiveballina.org.au

Email: dementiainclusiveballina@gmail.com

Or is a social group more for you?

Social groups encourage people living with dementia to be physically and socially active, and support other healthy activities like diet, nutrition and mind-stimulation games.

We hear some people say they are not ready to join a group yet, however, these services will help you receive support, information and early advice to assist you with your journey of living with dementia. They also help families have some time for themselves.

A referral through My Aged Care or the NDIS is required for these services.

Port Macquarie

Omnicare hosts social support groups at four day centres:

Port Macquarie (Morton Centre)

Port Macquarie (Greenmeadows)

Kempsey (Parklands Cottage) and

Wauchope (Bain Park)

Ph: 1300 336 488

www.omnicare.org.au

Coffs Harbour

Waratah Respite Services provides social support groups and centre-based respite care at Woolgoolga and Coffs Harbour.

Ph: (02) 6648 3610

www.waratahrespite.org

Grafton

Liveable provides a Sunshine Club that allows you to connect with your community. Transport between your home and the venue may be included.

Ph: 1800 289 927

www.livable.org.au/service/social-clubs-support

Lismore

St Carthages, Senior Day Club offers a wide variety of activities.

Ph: 1300 761 833 or 6620 0000

Beating Hearts Lismore

The Heights Bowling Club 181a High Street, Lismore Heights, NSW 2480

Monday 10am to 12 midday

Ph: 04 02 244 410

Email: beatingheartsoflismore@outlook.com

Ballina

Dementia Inclusive Ballina

Offers several activities and support services for people living with dementia and their carers

dementiainclusiveballina.org.au/

Email: dementiainclusiveballina@gmail.com

NNSWLHD Dementia Outreach Service

Offers information, resources, clinical support and referrals for people living with dementia and their carers. To access their support you will need to contact My Aged Care and request an aged care assessment.

Dementia Outreach Service Ph: 02 6620 6274

My Aged Care Ph: 1800 200 422

Byron

HeyDay Respite Service

Specialises in dementia care and provides centre-based respite, social support groups and individual flexible respite. Three Locations: Brunswick Heads, Lennox Head and Murwillumbah. Face-to-face counselling support for family carers is also available.

Ph: 02 6685 1629

heyday.org.au

Tweed

Lifefridge offers social groups where people are supported to engage in social and lifestyle activities.

Ph: 1800 043 186

www.lifefridge.org.au

lifefridge.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Program-Flyers-external-FINAL-compressed-2.pdf

For families and carers

Mid North Coast

A carer support group for all carers (Aged Care or Disability), to meet at a cafe once a month. The purpose of the group is for carers to experience some down time with

like-minded people. Coffee and Chat Group is a monthly social group for carers and past carers.

Port Macquarie Carers Coffee Morning: The second Thursday of the month from 10am to 12pm.

Contact: [Erica Lake portcarers@gmail.com](mailto:Erica.Lake@portcarers@gmail.com)
www.carersnsw.org.au/carer-groups/port-macquarie-carers

Laurieton Carers Coffee Morning: The third Wednesday of the month from 10:00am - 12:00pm.

Contact: [Margaret-Anne Young nsw.midnorthcoast@dementia.org.au](mailto:Margaret-Anne.Young@nsw.midnorthcoast@dementia.org.au)
www.carersnsw.org.au/carer-groups/laurieton-dementia-carer-support-group

Carer Gateway

Carer Gateway can help you to meet people who also care for a family member or friend. By sharing stories, knowledge and experience, you can learn from and support each other.

Ph: 1800 422 737
www.carergateway.gov.au

Other ways to stay healthy

The Dementia Guide

This guide is for anyone who has been impacted by any form of dementia. The information in this guide is divided into sections. Each section relates to a particular stage of your dementia journey.

www.dementia.org.au/sites/default/files/2025-06/The-Dementia-Guide.pdf

Younger Onset Dementia Guide

The Younger Onset Dementia Guide is the go-to resource for people living with younger onset dementia, their carers and family. You can download the Guide or order a free printed copy.

<https://www.dementia.org.au/about-dementia/younger-onset-dementia/younger-onset-dementia-guide>

Ensure you eat a well-balanced diet

If you need help, talk to your doctor about a referral to an allied health clinician.

alzheimerswa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Helpsheet-CaringForSomeone13-Nutrition_english.pdf

Stay physically active

Do something you enjoy, like taking a walk in the bush or on the beach, joining a gym or getting involved with local sporting groups. Playing bowls, table tennis and tennis or joining a walking group are all good ways to stay active. You can also speak to your doctor about referrals to an exercise physiologist or physiotherapist. The active and healthy website provides a list of local exercise programs for older people.

www.activeandhealthy.nsw.gov.au

Routine health checks

It is important to maintain routine checks with your GP and dentist, have your eyesight and hearing checked, and don't forget those important vaccinations! When life gets busy, we tend to forget these, but as we age, these checks become more important to keep us in the best possible health.

Reduce your risk of dementia

Up to 45% of dementia cases could be prevented.

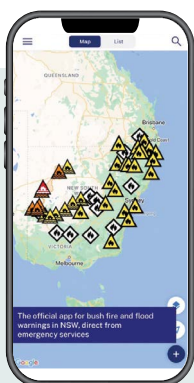
Here are the risk factors for developing dementia and what you can do today to protect your brain and reduce your dementia risk.

www.dementia.org.au/brain-health/reduce-your-risk-dementia

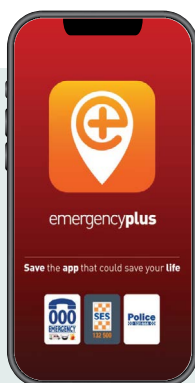
Preparing for Natural Disasters

We live in areas that are prone to natural disasters so it's important to plan ahead and be ready. Download these apps to receive warnings in your local area. This Guide from DCRC and QUT can also help you prepare.

www.dementiaresearch.org.au/resources/carer-ready-guide/



Hazards Near Me NSW



Emergency Plus



The BOM Weather app





Step 6. Staying safe

Dementia can affect your function, walking and balance. If you notice this, it is important to see your GP and get a referral to your local physiotherapist.

Staying safe is about maintaining strength, balance, mobility, endurance, independence in daily activities, and participation in leisure and other meaningful activities. Support may include aerobic, balance and resistance exercises, cognitive-motor training, and practising everyday tasks such as standing up from a chair, walking and climbing stairs.

Walking

If you notice changes in your mobility and balance, it is important to see your GP and get a referral to your local physiotherapist/exercise physiologist or a gym. They can assess you for a walking aid and provide you with some strengthening exercises to help improve balance. Many local physiotherapists and the local health district run groups to prevent falls. To find a local program go to:

www.activeandhealthy.nsw.gov.au/find-a-program

How to get up safely if you have a fall:

www.activeandhealthy.nsw.gov.au/preventing-falls/if-you-have-a-fall?

Feeling safe at home

There are many tricks to being safe at home, and these apply to all older people, particularly people living with dementia. Below is a list of resources and local services to help you stay safe at home.

At home with Dementia

At Home with Dementia is a free Dementia Australia service that helps you make your home more dementia-friendly.

www.dementia.org.au/get-support/home-dementia

Adapting your home

Alzheimer's WA help sheet outlines a number of ways to make living at home easier for someone with dementia.

alzheimerswa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Helpsheet-Environment01_AdaptingYourHome_english.pdf

Safety issues - caring for someone in the home

If safety measures are in place, an individual living with dementia can live in the comfort of his or her own home or a caregiver's residence. As the disease progresses, the person's abilities will change. But with some creativity and flexibility, the home can be adapted to support these changes.

alzheimerswa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Helpsheet-CaringForSomeone03-SafetyIssues_english.pdf

Dementia Outreach Service (DOS)

The Dementia Outreach Service (DOS) has a good understanding of needs in the home and simple modifications to promote independence.

Ph: 02 6620 6274

Technology

Equipment and technology will assist you in being safe. Good examples are clever watches that talk to you if you fall or get lost, and equipment in the home to make living easier.

www.dementia.org.au/living-dementia/home-life/tools-and-aids-help-home

Smart Homes for Dementia

A smart home is a place of residence with integrated technology to assist the people who live there to remain independent, safe, and improve their quality of life. Smart homes are set up with sensors, actuators, and intelligent software which can be integrated into furniture, walls, and everyday objects. Using computers, people can then monitor what is going on inside the home even when external to it. This makes it possible to control the internal environment (e.g., adapting the light). If monitoring an occupant's behaviour, family members can automatically warn an emergency service if the observed behaviour deviates from the normal pattern.

www.ariaa.org.au/knowledge-implementation-hub/technology-in-aged-care/types-technology-aged-care/smart-homes

Living with Dementia: How Allied Health and Dementia Rehabilitation can help

Allied health professionals can help people living with dementia to maximise mobility, meaningful activities and relationships. This is called dementia rehabilitation. Rehabilitation targets cognitive, psychological, social and physical aspects of functioning. Rehabilitation also supports families and care partners.

www.monash.edu/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/3583963/Living-with-Dementia-Brochure-2024-web-.pdf



Step 7.

Adapting as your health changes

As your health changes your family will notice that there are things you do well and other things you need help with. Stay focused on what you can do and let family and services support you to live each day to its fullest.

Stay focused on what you do well

As your health changes, you and those around you may notice changes in what you do well and how you manage your day-to-day needs. Having the help of family and friends where you need it can lessen stress and feelings of being overwhelmed. It's important to focus on what you can do and develop your network of helpers so you remain as active as possible.

Your GP or the nurse looking after you will run regular short memory tests with you. The results will show what you can do well and your health professional will discuss these with you and your family.

Your support team may include:

- your family and friends
- your GP and or nurse
- your specialist doctor/s
- your allied health team.

Unfinished planning?

If you haven't taken Step 4 (see page 14) in your journey yet about your choices in end-of-life care, now is definitely the time. The teams who can guide you with this decision include your GP or practice nurse, and your aged care or local palliative care service.

Your team will discuss with you your options of either dying at home, in a palliative care unit or in a residential aged care home.

Dementia Support Australia (DSA)

DSA provides help at any time of the day or night, even on public holidays for carers of people living with dementia, where personalities and behaviour are changing.

Some of the changes may be difficult to understand. This service can help with working out why and offering ways to help.

Ph: 1800 699 799

www.dementia.com.au

Dementia Australia is here for everyone

Whether you're living with dementia, caring for someone, seeking information or training, supporting the cause, or contributing to research, we're here for you.

Ph: 1800 100 500

www.dementia.org.au

Alzheimer's WA provides a help sheet on understanding changes to behaviour.

alzheimerswa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Helpsheet-ChangedBehaviours02-ProblemSolving_english.pdf

"I used to think I could do everything myself, but accepting some help and support was the best thing I ever did!"

Mid North Coast resident living with dementia

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While the Australian Government helped fund this document, it has not reviewed the content and is not responsible for any injury, loss or damage however arising from the use of or reliance on the information provided herein. Links are correct at time of publishing.

On your journey

We hope these steps have helped you and your family adjust to life with dementia. Now it's time to keep living and enjoying life.

Notes:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Healthy North Coast is an independent, not-for-profit organisation proudly delivering the PHN program in North Coast NSW. We are committed to improving the health of our communities through quality primary health care.

The PHN program is an Australian Government Initiative.

hnc.org.au

enquiries@hnc.org.au

ABN: 18 154 252 132