

# Dementia Information Pack

For Dementia Patients &  
Their Caregivers

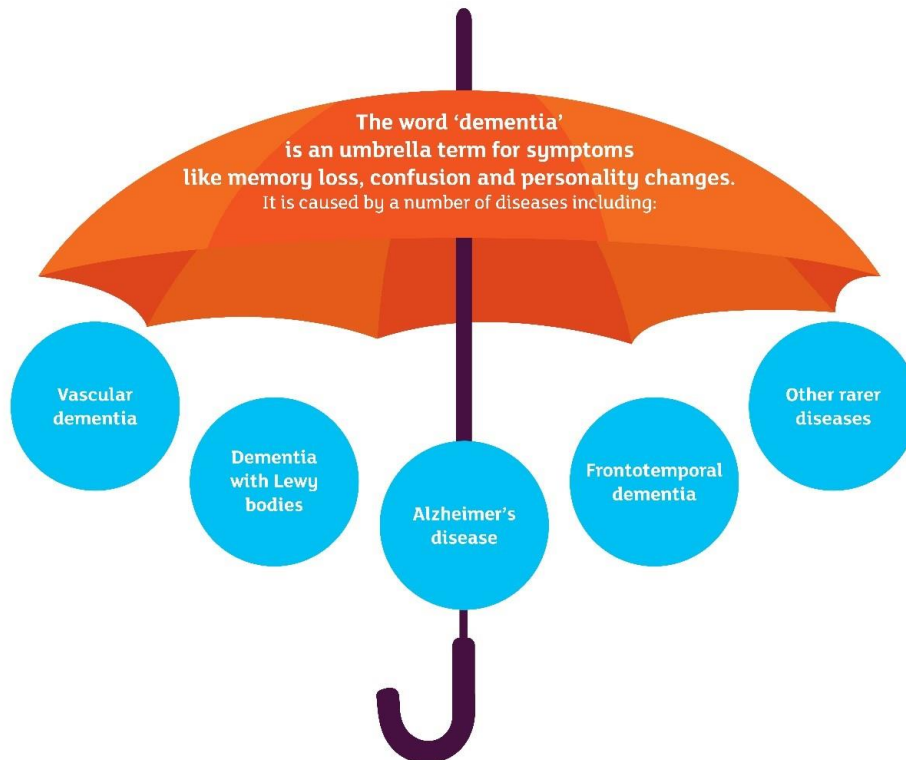
**Ambrose Avenue  
Group Practice**

 **The Colte Partnership™**  
*At The Heart of Primary Care*

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# What Is Dementia and What Causes It?

*Dementia is a word used to describe a group of symptoms that occur when brain cells stop working properly.*



## Alzheimer's Disease

Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia. It's found in more than half of people diagnosed with dementia.

It is a physical disease, causing permanent damage to individual brain cells, due to the build-up of proteins causing Plaques and Tangles. The numbers of damaged cells gradually increase over time, so the brain starts to function less and less well.

People with Alzheimer's also have a shortage of some important chemicals in their brain. These chemicals help to transmit messages around the brain, so when there is a shortage the signals are not transmitted as effectively.

It may begin slowly, and the decline can happen over a number of years. It usually affects short-term memory first. Gradually, everyday tasks become more and more difficult. No two people are the same.

## Vascular Dementia

Vascular dementia is caused by reduced blood supply to the brain due to diseased blood vessels.

To be healthy and function properly, brain cells need a constant supply of blood to bring oxygen and nutrients. Blood is delivered to the brain through a network of vessels called the vascular system. If the vascular system within the brain becomes damaged - so that the blood vessels leak or become blocked - then blood cannot reach the brain cells and they will eventually die.

This death of brain cells can cause problems with memory, thinking or reasoning. Together these three elements are known as cognition. When these cognitive problems are bad enough to have a significant impact on daily life, this is known as vascular dementia.

## Dementia with Lewy Bodies

Lewy body dementia is caused by Lewy body disease.

In this disease, tiny clumps of proteins known as Lewy bodies appear in the nerve cells of the brain.

Dementia with Lewy bodies can cause both common dementia symptoms like memory loss and confusion, as well as other symptoms, like changes to alertness.

Dementia with Lewy bodies is a progressive disease. This means that symptoms get worse over time. Progression can happen slowly over several years, but the speed of change and type of symptoms can vary from person to person.

## Frontotemporal Dementia

The word 'frontotemporal' refers to the two sets of lobes (frontal and temporal) in the brain that are damaged in this type of dementia. FTD occurs when disease damages nerve cells in these lobes. This causes the connections between them and other parts of the brain to break down. The levels of chemical messengers in the brain also get lower over time. These messengers allow nerve cells to send signals to each other and the rest of the body. As more and more nerve cells are damaged and die, the brain tissue in the frontal and temporal lobes starts to get smaller.

*There are two broad types of Frontotemporal dementia:*

- Behavioural variant FTD – where damage to the frontal lobes of the brain mainly causes problems with behaviour and personality. These lobes are found behind the forehead and process information that affects how we behave and the control of our emotions. They also help us to plan, solve problems and focus for long enough to finish a task.
- Primary progressive aphasia (PPA) occurs when damage to the temporal lobes – on either side of the head nearest the ears – causes language problems. This part of the brain has many roles. A key function of the left temporal lobe is to store the meanings of words and the names of objects. The right temporal lobe helps most people recognise familiar faces and objects.

The first noticeable symptoms for a person with FTD will be changes to their personality and behaviour and/or difficulties with language.

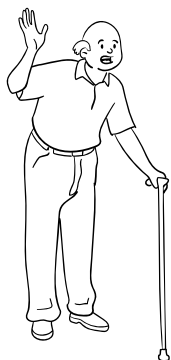
### Mixed Dementia

This term is used when a patient has more than one type of dementia.

# Living Well With Dementia

If you have been diagnosed with dementia it is important to know that you can continue to enjoy life and stay as independent as much as possible.

Living well with dementia can relate to many things:



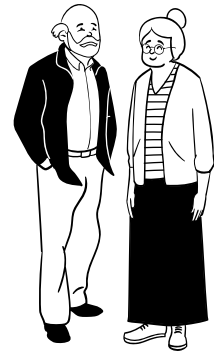
### Keeping active

Keeping active can improve your mental and physical health.

Staying active does not need to be strenuous and may mean that you take a walk or do some gardening. Ask our Care Coordinator to find somewhere for you.

## Interacting with others

- Socialising with others helps to strengthen the brain and increases the ability to manage emotions.
- Stay in touch with family and friends.
- There are many friend making services and activity classes in Colchester and Tendring that Ambrose Group Practice can help you to organise. (Just contact the surgery and ask to make an appointment with the social prescriber or to speak to the Care Co-ordinator.)
- Carry a dementia card with you. This helps people know that you have dementia.
- Allow people to know when they may be helping too much, when you are able to be independent.



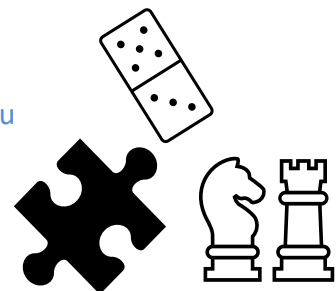
## At home

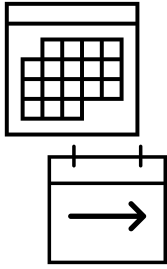
- Follow a routine. Doing things at the same time each day or week can reassure you and stimulate your memory.
- Pin notes up in prominent places if there are things you need to do regularly, like locking the doors at night or putting out the recycling.
- Carry a notebook to write down daily tasks.
- Put important things, like glasses or keys, in the same place every time so that you know where to find them.
- Get a clock that shows the date and day of the week.

## Keeping busy

Keep playing games if you enjoy them. Don't worry if it takes you longer or if you need to switch to easier versions.

Keeping your brain active helps with your dementia.





### Planning ahead

When you feel ready it is a good idea to start thinking ahead.

You may want to consider:

- Financial plans
  - Know where important documents are kept
  - Pay bills by direct debit
- Housing options/adaptations
- Legal affairs
  - Power of attorney
  - You can make up an advanced statement to explain your preferences and how you would like to be cared for.

# What Support Is There for Dementia Patients?

At Ambrose Group Practice we want you to know that we will support you in every way we can. If you need extra assistance or advice just call the surgery and ask to speak to the Care Co-ordinator.

There are lots of support and activity organisations that we can help you get involved with.

Below is a list of services that are available within Colchester and surrounding area (some activities may charge):

- Dancing with Dementia  
*Location: The Ark Methodist Church, Gavin Way, Highwoods, CO4 9FF, Colchester*  
*Who is it for? People living with dementia and their companions*  
*Call 07490374717 or book via website [www.dancenetworkassociation.org.uk](http://www.dancenetworkassociation.org.uk)*
- Singing for the Brain  
*Location: Orchard Baptist Church, 23 Blackheath, CO2 0AE, Colchester*  
*Who is it for? People with dementia and their carers*  
*Call 07749455638 or email [essexandhertsgroup@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:essexandhertsgroup@alzheimers.org.uk)*

- **Dementia Café**

**Location:** Orchard Baptist Church Hall, 23 Mersea Road, Blackheath, Colchester, CO2 0AE

**Who is it for?** People with dementia, family and friends

To book call **07707291601** or email **dementia@ageconcerncolchester.org.uk**

**Dementia Café collaboration Abbeyfields Medical Centre/Ambrose Avenue Group Practice, Ardleigh Surgery and community 360**

C3 Church building (former army gym), Ypres Road, Abbey Fields

Second Thursday of every month from 10.30 - 12 noon

Organized by Abbey Fields Medical Centre/C3 Church

**PCC Turner Road**

New seasonal dementia café being planned in the PCC café run by Community360

Will be sponsored by a Dementia Action Alliance member (they pick up the tab for refreshments)

First one will be Wednesday 11 May from 10am -1pm

- **Active Minds:** Active Minds groups help people to engage in a range of activities (musical bingo, reminiscence discussions, puzzles, quizzes, arts and crafts).

**Location:** Rickstones Church Hall, Rickstones Road, CM8 2NG, Witham

**Who is it for?** People with mild to moderate dementia and memory impairments

Call **0300 770 8090** or email **info@affc.org.uk**

- **Age Well East Dementia Friendly Activity Group**

**Location:** The Veranda, 63 North Hill, Colchester, CO1 1PX

**Who is it for?** For people living with the early stages of Dementia and their carers/partners

Call **0300 37 33 333**

**Local activity groups for dementia caregivers:**

- **Essex Befriends**

**Location:** Available by telephone: **0300 770 1263**

online: **essexbefriends.org.uk**

or home visits: email your request to

**essexbefriends@affc.org.uk**

**Who is it for?** Carers, older people, those with mental ill health or who have a learning disability

- **Carer Information & Support Programme One**

**Location:** Marylands, 43 Shrub End Road, CO3 3UE, Colchester

**Who is it for?** Carers of people with dementia

There are also protocols, information booklets and advice services which you may find useful:



The Herbert Protocol is a national scheme that encourages carers, family and friends to provide and put together useful information, which can then be used in the event of a vulnerable person going missing. It enables the police or other emergency services to have quick access to information which could potentially speed up the process of finding the vulnerable person.

***You can find the form online or the surgery would be happy to provide you with one (just contact the surgery and ask to speak to the Care Co-ordinator).***

#### Advice services for caregivers:

- Carers Direct: *Carers Direct is an NHS helpline for carers. They can offer advice, information and support. You can call them on **0300 123 1053: Monday to Friday 9am to 8pm and on weekends from 11am to 4pm.** You can also ask your question using webchat.*
- The Carers Trust: *The Carers Trust was previously The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and Crossroads Care. They provide access to breaks for carers, information and advice, training and employment opportunities. You can call them on **0300 772 9600** or visit **www.carers.org**.*
- Carers First [www.carersfirst.org.uk](http://www.carersfirst.org.uk) 0300 303 1555
- Together in dementia everyday (TIDE): *is a UK wide network connecting carers and former carers of people with dementia to create real change together. You can call them on **0151 237 2669** or email **carers@tide.uk.net**.*
- Age Concern dementia support: *Age Concern Colchester & North East Essex offer a support helpline. You can call them on **01206 368420** and **press option 5**.*
- Alzheimer's Society: *Alzheimer's Society can provide you with a guide 'Caring for a person with dementia: A practical guide'. You can view this online or order by post. The surgery would be happy to assist you with this (just call the surgery and ask to speak to the Care Co-ordinator).*
- Essex Carers Support: **01255 474410**
- SinglePoint: *This is a 24/7 telephone advice line for all palliative and end of life care patients **01206 890360***

**WE ALSO HAVE DEMENTIA RESOURCE PACKS AVAILABLE – CONTACT THE SURGERY AND ASK FOR THE CARE COORDINATOR IF YOU WOULD LIKE ONE**