



Younger people with dementia?

This information sheet outlines some of the issues you may need to consider if you are a younger person.

Types of dementia

There are many different forms of dementia. Research carried out in London in 1998 showed that:

Compared to the older population, younger people are less likely to have Alzheimer's disease (34 per cent of those surveyed).

Younger people are more likely to have a rare form of dementia (19 per cent of those surveyed).

Rare forms include fronto-temporal dementia and dementia as a result of multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's and Huntington's diseases. People with Down's syndrome may also develop dementia at an early age.

Diagnosis and support

An accurate diagnosis of your illness is very important. Some conditions that lead to dementia in younger people may be treatable. While a complete cure may not be possible, treatment may mean the dementia can be prevented from getting worse.

If you are working you may be experiencing some difficulties that need to be understood by your employer and colleagues. A diagnosis may help your employer understand.

After your diagnosis your GP or specialist should arrange to see you regularly to assess any changes in your illness and to discuss any problems. If they do not suggest this, you can ask for an appointment whenever you think it may be helpful.

Please contact the DEMENTIA SA Office

Support | Awareness | Education | Counseling | Training | Resource centre | Advocacy
info@dementiasa.org or support@dementiasa.org www.dementiasa.org

National Helpline 0860 MEMORY / 0860 636 679



After your diagnosis it is important that you are referred to, or at least told about, the support services which may be available to help you and your family. Dementia SA will be able to assist you in this regard.

Children

Children of any age need to understand your illness, how it affects you and what changes to expect. Of course, each child is different and will react in their own way but most children will need clear explanations and reassurance.

Try to involve your children in your care.

Try to involve your children in your care. But do not give them too much responsibility or let it take up too much of their time. Encourage them to continue with their normal lives. The Dementia SA advice sheet “explaining to children” may be helpful.

Working

You may want to stay in work, at least for a while. This might be in your usual job, or you may think about switching to other work.

Driving

Many people with dementia are able to drive safely from time to time after their diagnosis. However, it is illegal to continue to drive if your driving has become unsafe owing to problems with your health. See the advice sheet '*Driving with Dementia*'.

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Financial and legal arrangements

You will need to plan your finances carefully, taking into account any changes in your income such as the loss of earnings or the receipt of a new benefit.

An important step in sorting out your finances is to make sure you know where all your financial documents are kept. These might include mortgage/tenancy papers, insurance policies, pension details, building society and bank statements.

In view of the fact that South African law does not make provision for an Enduring Power of Attorney, it may be necessary to apply for a Curatorship. A Curator Bonis can be appointed through the High Court to see to the person with dementia's financial affairs and a Curator Personae to see to their personal affairs.

You should also seek legal advice about making or changing a will. See the information sheet on *'Financial and Legal Arrangements'*

Equipment and adaptations

If you are experiencing difficulty in moving around your home or managing daily living activities you may benefit from special equipment or adaptations to make life easier and safer.

An occupational therapist, can provide advice and can carry out a comprehensive assessment of your need for equipment and/or adaptations.

Some equipment may be hired to you whilst you need it or you may wish to purchase your own. Some medical aids do cover the cost of assistive devices.

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Notes:

Contact us:

3rd Floor,
State House,
3 Rose Street,
Cape Town

P.O. Box 16421
Vlaeberg
8018

Tel: (021) 421 0077/78
Email: info@dementiasa.org
Or support@dementiasa.org



www.dementiasa.org

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