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Association for Dementia and Alzheimer's of South Africa

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# What is Dementia?

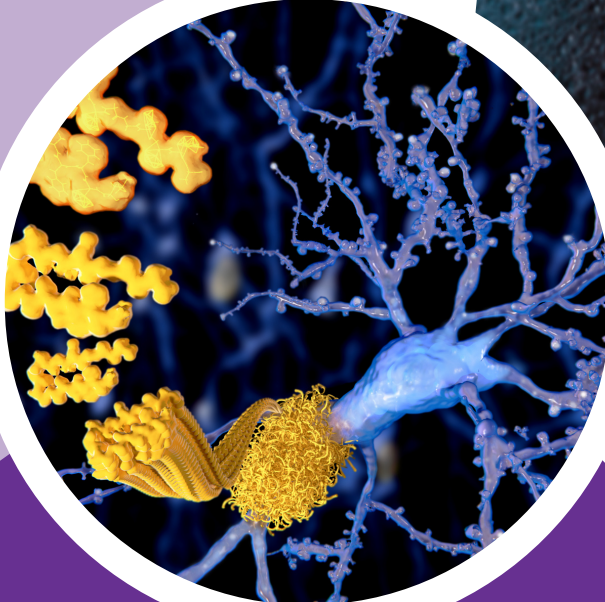
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## Did you know?

- Dementia is a term for several brain diseases that affect memory, thinking, and the ability to perform daily activities.
- Dementia is chronic & progressive and causes irreversible damage to brain cells. There is currently no cure.
- Dementia is NOT a part of normal ageing.
- It usually affects older people, typically over 65. Dementia can develop in younger people but is less common.
- The estimated growth of people living with dementia is set to rise from 55 million in 2019 to 139 million in 2050 (Alzheimer's Disease International) in first-world countries.
- There are over 100 forms of dementia, with the most well-known form of dementia being Alzheimer's disease.

# Warning Signs of Dementia

In most cases, dementia symptoms progress gradually over several years. The early signs, usually memory problems, may not be detectable immediately. Symptoms vary, and forgetting things is a normal part of ageing, but those with dementia often have one or more of the following:

- Memory problems (short-term).
- Diminished ability to plan activities.
- Problems with language and communication.
- General confusion, disorientation in time and/or place.
- Difficulty with abstract thinking, and lapses in judgment.
- Difficulty performing a familiar activity.
- Misplacing objects and problems keeping track of things.
- Behaviour and personality changes.
- Sudden mood swings.
- Challenges in understanding visual and spatial information.
- Loss of initiative or apathy.

***Dementia can only be diagnosed by a qualified and experienced health professional. For more information, contact your local ADASA office. Regional office details are on our website.***

