

Questions to Ask After a Dementia Diagnosis: For Caregivers

Also available in Italian | Disponibile anche in italiano

This is a resource for the Italian community. It was developed together with caregivers of people living with dementia within the Italian community in Canada. A caregiver could be a family member, friend, or another person who is supporting a person living with dementia.

This resource provides information about:



Questions to ask your doctor or other healthcare provider after your family member or friend receives a dementia diagnosis



Some people living with dementia and care partners have said when they were told about the dementia diagnosis, it was hard to take in any other information the doctor shared with them. Others also said they weren't given enough information at that appointment or did not know what questions to ask. Care partners and people living with dementia strongly suggest making a follow-up appointment to ask questions.

We have put together a list of questions you may want to ask your doctor after a dementia diagnosis. Your family doctor may not be able to answer all of your questions. If that is the case, another health or social care provider, such as a nurse practitioner, social worker, or Alzheimer Society support staff might be able to provide more information. You don't need to ask all the questions. There is also space for you to add your own questions.

Questions about my family member/friend's diagnosis

- How certain are you about my family member/friend's diagnosis?
- Will they require a referral to a specialist?
- Do they have a specific type of dementia? How does this type of dementia affect their brain?
- What are the common symptoms of this type of dementia?
- What can they expect to happen in the next year, and next 3 years?
- Are their children or grandchildren more likely to get dementia?
- How and what should we tell our/their tell my family?



Questions about treatments

- What can my family member/friend do to slow the progression of their symptoms?
- Are there medications that you recommend?
- What are the potential benefits and risks/side effects of these medications?
- Are there resources that can help to manage their medications (for example, blister packs, their pharmacist)?
- Are there changes to their diet and exercise, or other lifestyle changes that you recommend?
- Could an occupational therapist or physiotherapist help them manage changes? If so, could you refer them?



Questions about symptoms and day-to-day activities

- My family member/friend is having trouble with... _____ (for example, forgetting appointments, sleeping, getting lost, using my phone). What can we do to manage this?
- Will they need to stop driving? If yes, how will they manage to get around?
- What can they do to continue activities that are important to them, such as... _____ (for example, volunteering, looking after grandchildren, going for walks)?
- What should we consider to keep my family member/friend safe in the community?

Questions about care, services, and planning ahead

- Can I bring a family member or friend to our appointments to support me with translation to Italian?
- Can you recommend any dementia support services (for example, support groups, social programs) for us? Are you aware of any services that are culturally-specific or available in Italian?
- Who can we speak to about finances and legal matters (for example, power of attorney, financial planning, employment concerns)?
- Who can my family member/friend speak to if they have concerns about their safety? (for example, quality of care, risk of abuse or neglect)
- How can my family member/friend access home care services to support their independence at home?
- What conversations should we have about my family member/friend's future plans and wishes (for example, care preferences, decisions about services and supports)?

