

Learning About Programs and Services

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:



Programs and services for people living with dementia and caregivers including medical services, community-based services, and supported living options



Introduction to Programs and Services

Programs and services are resources in the community that can be accessed by people living with dementia and caregivers for additional help and support. Programs and services may include medical services, community-based services such as home care, support and wellness programs, and supported living options like long-term care homes. Each will be described below.

While programs and services are designed to help, it's not uncommon for people to be reluctant to access the services. There are many reasons people may hesitate, including worry about giving up their independence, costs, perceptions around "not managing the situation on their own". However, most people find the programs and services allow them to maintain their independence. Planning for services that may be needed in the future is also important, especially since many have long wait times.

Dementia progresses over time. The support you need today may be different than the support you need in the future. You can return to this resource over time as your needs change. Visit forwardwithdementia.ca to learn about the **Progression of Dementia**.

In developing this resource, caregivers from the Italian community shared the challenges of language barriers, and emphasized the importance of cultural and language specific support.

As dementia progresses, some people living with dementia may lose the ability to speak other languages, and go back to speaking their first language. People living with dementia and caregivers who do not speak English may experience language barriers which can make using programs and services difficult. In addition, the way services are provided may not be culturally appropriate. **It is recommended to ask your doctor or other social care provider, for example, Alzheimer Society staff if they are aware of any culturally-specific services in your area. You can also ask organizations if they offer services in your language, or can refer you to another service.**

Below are some examples of translated dementia information and culturally-specific services. This list is not comprehensive and does not provide information for all provinces/territories, but offers ideas and some recommendations from caregivers that contributed to these resources.



Italian dementia information

- [“Dementia, Your Companion Guide”](#) from McGill University
- Finding Your Way in [Italian](#) and [English](#)



Italian dementia services

- [COSTI Senior Services](#) (Toronto, ON)
- [Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre Seniors Services](#) (Toronto, ON)
- [York-West Active Living Centre](#) (Toronto, ON)
- [Villa Charities](#) (Toronto, ON)

Medical services

It is common for family doctors to diagnose dementia and manage the care of the person living with dementia. However, sometimes referrals to specialists are needed. Specialists might include geriatricians, geriatric psychiatrists, or neurologists. Family doctors and specialists may also work with other healthcare professionals such as nurses, occupational therapists, dietitians or social workers to help manage care.

Community-based services

The following information provides an overview of community-based services including the Alzheimer Society and home and community support services.

The Alzheimer Society

When someone is diagnosed with dementia, they and their caregiver(s) should be quickly connected to their local Alzheimer Society. **The Alzheimer Society supports people living with any form of dementia or memory loss.**

The Alzheimer Society helps people living with dementia and caregivers to manage all aspects of living with dementia. Services offered by the Alzheimer Society vary depending on location, but may include information, education, health and wellness programs, counselling and support groups for people with dementia and/or caregivers. Many people living with dementia and caregivers find that support groups are a helpful way to meet and learn from others who are going through similar experiences, as well as offer support to others.

The First Link Program is a program offered through The Alzheimer Society. It is designed to help people newly diagnosed with dementia get the help they need as soon as possible. Any healthcare provider can make a referral to First Link.

Visit [The Alzheimer Society of Canada](#) for information. You can also call 1-800-616-8816 to get connected in your region.

Home and community support services

Home and community support services may help people living with dementia to live at home independently and safely. Home and community care agencies coordinate provincially-funded services, although each province and territory differs slightly in what services are provided. Some services may be fully covered, some may require a fee, and some may offer subsidies.

In most areas, a person living with dementia or a caregiver can contact home and community support services themselves, and request an assessment to determine which services they are eligible for. You can also speak with your doctor or other healthcare provider to request a referral. Services may include:

Home care services

- **Nursing care:** help to take medications, change bandages and clean wounds, or recover from an injury or health problem.
- **Occupational therapy:** help to solve problems with completing activities of daily living independently and safely. This may include access to equipment (for example, walkers or personal alarms), and home adaptations (for example, a raised shower seat).
- **Physiotherapy:** help to restore and maintain physical mobility, function, and well-being.
- **Speech language pathology:** treatment of communication and swallowing problems.
- **Personal care:** assistance with activities of daily living, such as bathing, getting dressed, eating, and assistance with medications.
- **Social work:** help individuals and families improve well-being and adapt to challenging situations. This may include providing education, resources, counselling, and support accessing other community services.
- **Dietitian support:** help with developing a nutrition plan to meet needs through food and supplements, and monitoring weight, blood work and swallowing concerns.





Homemaking services

- Support with routine household tasks such as cleaning, laundry, shopping, banking and meal preparation.

Community support services

- **Adult day programs:** include recreational and social activities, meals, personal care and basic health care services provided in a group setting, for adults living in the community.
- **Health and wellness programs** such as exercise or falls prevention classes.
- **Home maintenance** such as lawn mowing, shoveling, or home repair.
- **Meal programs** such as meal delivery or community-based meal programs.
- **Supportive transportation services** for those who cannot drive, or who need support with public transportation.
- **Volunteer services** such as social visitors or telephone checks.
- **Respite services** that allow caregivers to take a break. Respite may be offered by personal support workers in the home, adult day programs, or overnight respite centers.



Supported living options

- Information about supportive living environments, such as retirement homes or assisted living.
- Assessments and applications for long-term care homes (or nursing homes, personal care facilities, continuing care facilities, etc.)



Home and community support services: Contact Information

Alberta	Visit Alberta's provincial website or call 8-1-1
British Columbia	Visit British Columbia's provincial website or call 8-1-1
Manitoba	Visit Manitoba's provincial website or call 2-1-1
New Brunswick	Visit Alberta's provincial website or call 8-1-1
Newfoundland and Labrador	Visit Newfoundland and Labrador's provincial website to find information and phone numbers for each region
Northwest Territories	Visit the Northwest Territories' provincial website or call 1-867-767- 9030
Nova Scotia	Visit Nova Scotia's provincial website or call 1-800-225-7225
Nunavut	Visit Nunavut's provincial website or call 867-975-5941
Ontario	Visit Ontario's provincial website or call 310-2222
Prince Edward Island	Visit Prince Edward Island's provincial website or call 902-368-6130
Québec	Visit Québec's provincial website or call 8-1-1
Saskatchewan	Visit Saskatchewan's provincial website or call 1-306-655-4346
Yukon	Visit Yukon's provincial website or call 1-800-661-0408 (ext. 5774)

If the person living with dementia needs care beyond what the province or territory can provide, additional services may be purchased privately. Check with your local home and community support agency for recommendations to private services in your area.

"Sometimes you just can't do it all."

- Caregiver from the Italian community

Long-term care and other supported living options

As dementia progresses, it is common to discuss whether the person living with dementia should stay at home or move into a supported living environment. Each province or territory differs in the available options, and what they are named. Often support is offered along a continuum, where the amount and type of care increases as the person needs more support. The types of support available may include:

- **Independent living** within a retirement community;
- **Assisted living** with more support;
- **Long-term care homes** (or nursing homes, personal care facilities, continuing care facilities, etc.) that offer 24 hour nursing and personal care support.

Caregivers from the Italian community in Canada shared it is often preferred to care for the person living with dementia at home for as long as possible. There may also be a sense of responsibility for children to return the support they received from their parents. **In some situations, the needs of the person living with dementia or safety concerns are greater than the support that can be provided by the caregiver or by home and community support, making a move necessary.**

"A person living with dementia can be loved and looked after by more people after moving to long-term care."

- Caregiver from the Italian community

Caregivers expressed that culturally-appropriate long-term care homes may be better suited to meet the needs of the person living with dementia, however, these homes are not available everywhere and may have long wait lists. Decisions to move to a long-term care home can raise feelings of guilt and concern about whether the person living with dementia will have their needs met.

However, some caregivers shared they were better able to focus on spending quality time with the person living with dementia following a move to a long-term care home. Caregivers also spoke about the benefits of integrating aspects of home and culture into any long-term home, such as music, visits from faith leaders such as priests, food and family visits.



Notes

Use this space to write down any notes, reflections, or questions you have about this resource.