



**What is the
difference between
dementia and Alzheimer's?**

The School of Dementia ®



What is the difference between dementia and Alzheimer's?





Read about the difference between dementia and Alzheimer's.

Alzheimer's and dementia are often used interchangeably. This can lead to confusion. Dementia is an umbrella term for diseases that alter and weaken the brain. Alzheimer's disease is a dementia disorder.

In this article you can read about:

- What is dementia?
- Dementia is not caused by old age
- Treatment of dementia
- What is Alzheimer's disease?
- Alzheimer's damages brain cells

What is dementia?

Dementia is an umbrella term for a range of diseases that are due to pathological changes in the brain.

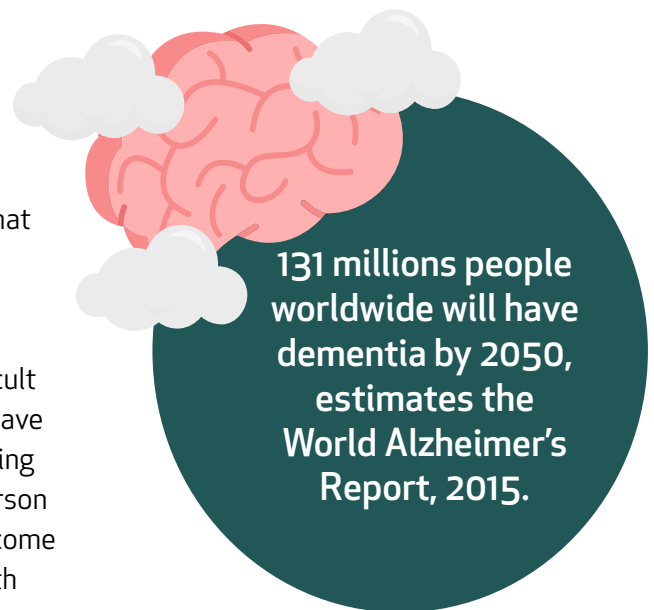
People with dementia find that remembering things becomes more difficult and that it becomes more difficult to concentrate. Some people with dementia may also have difficulty finding the right words in a conversation. Having a dementia disorder is very frustrating because the person who is ill is in the beginning aware that daily life will become more and more difficult. As time passes, the person with dementia becomes more and more affected by the disease and requires more help.

The dementia disorder may affect some people so much that they can no longer tell the difference between what is right and wrong in different situations. For example, they may not be able to stand wearing clothes, and will undress completely – wherever they are. Sometimes people with a dementia disorder can hurl abuse at family members and friends without any reason. Some people with dementia forget where they live and maybe even their own name. They may also find it difficult to distinguish between colours and might not always notice other people's movements. Some people whose brain has been seriously damaged by the dementia disorder may see and experience things that do not exist in reality.

Dementia is not caused by old age

Many believe that dementia is due to old age. This is not true. Dementia is always due to disease in the brain. When you age, the probability of getting a disease in the brain increases, but you do not become dement just because you grow older.

There are more than 200 diseases that cause dementia symptoms. The most common form of dementia is Alzheimer's disease. Other examples of dementia disorders are Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, Huntington's disease and Parkinson's disease.



Dementia treatment

Dementia disorders are incurable, but there are medicines that are able to temporarily stop or delay the development of the disease. It is therefore important to be thoroughly examined by a doctor if there is a suspicion of a dementia disorder. The doctor must find out which dementia disorder is involved and the best way to treat the disease, because treatment is not the same for all dementia disorders.

What is Alzheimer's disease?

Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia. However, suffering dementia before turning 60 is very rare. Although the proportion of people with Alzheimer's disease increases with age. Around one out of 100 Danes aged 65-69 suffer from Alzheimer's disease. Almost every fifth elderly person over the age of ninety is afflicted with Alzheimer's.

As with other dementia disorders, Alzheimer's disease causes memory and speech problems. People with Alzheimer's disease may also experience these symptoms:



Poor memory

It is difficult to recall conversations and events even though they took place recently.



Lack of initiative

Passivity, indifference and no desire to do anything.



Everyday chores suddenly become difficult to perform

For example, a person could put the kettle in the dishwasher or forget how to tie a knot on the rubbish bag.



Impaired judgement

Some people suddenly start spending a lot of money or wear summer clothes in the winter.



Changes in emotions, temperament and personality

The person with dementia may suddenly change from being very talkative and social to being sullen and uncommunicative. Some people may also become very angry or sad without there being any obvious reason.



Confusion

Getting lost in areas they have known since childhood, or losing orientation and ending up driving on the wrong side of the road. As the Alzheimer's disease gradually damages more of the brain, problems with talking, eating and walking may arise.

Alzheimer's damages brain cells

Autopsies on people with Alzheimer's have revealed that the disease destroys brain cells in certain areas of the brain. The first area to be affected is the memory, but in the end the brain is so damaged that the person dies from the disease.

All dementia disorders are serious and have high human costs for the person with the disorder and their relatives. You should therefore not hesitate to contact your doctor if you suspect that you or a family member may have dementia. Rapid and early treatment provides more good years compared to the disorder first being detected and treated very late.