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# Dementia

**Dementia affects an increasing number of people and their family members. It impacts memory, thinking, and everyday life. Early identification and appropriate support improve the quality of life for a person with dementia.**

## What is Dementia?

Dementia is a condition that affects brain function. It causes memory deterioration and difficulties in thinking, problem-solving and communication. There are many types of dementia - all are progressive, with symptoms worsening over time. Early diagnosis is crucial to receiving the right treatment and sufficient support.

## Dementia in Finland

- There are approximately 150,000 people in Finland diagnosed with dementia.
- Around 23,000 new cases are diagnosed each year.
- About 600 working-age individuals (under 65) develop dementia annually.

## Symptoms of Dementia

Symptoms vary between different dementia types and individuals, but common symptoms include

- declining short-term memory
- difficulties with concentration and decision-making
- reduced initiative
- problems learning new things
- difficulties in understanding and producing speech
- mood swings
- problems with spatial awareness and orientation
- behavioral changes

## The Most Common Types of Dementia

**Alzheimer's disease:** the most common type of dementia, often beginning with short-term memory loss and difficulty learning new things



**Vascular dementia:** caused by circulatory disorders in the brain and may result in language difficulties and problems with spatial awareness

**Lewy body dementia:** symptoms include varying cognitive performance, changes in attention, increased risk of falling and visual hallucinations

**Frontotemporal dementia:** affects perception, behavior, and personality; memory-related symptoms are usually not present in the early stages

### When Should You Be Concerned?

Forgetfulness and memory problems do not always indicate dementia, but symptoms should be examined if:

- you or a family member is worried about memory issues
- memory decline interferes with daily life or work performance
- concentration becomes more difficult
- significant changes in behavior or mood occur

### Where to Get Help?

If you suspect dementia, contact healthcare services and seek a memory evaluation. It is important to determine the cause of memory symptoms, as they may be caused by other conditions rather than progressive dementia. You can seek medical help at a health center, occupational healthcare service, or private clinic.

### How Is Dementia Treated?

There is no cure for dementia, but symptoms can be relieved and disease progression slowed.

**Non-medical treatments:** for example, physical and occupational therapy, memory groups, art and music therapy, and social interaction promote well-being

**Medication:** some medications can slow the progression of Alzheimer's disease, and other symptoms of dementia may be relieved with drug therapy



### More Information and Support

**More information about dementia** on Muistiliitto's website: [www.muistiliitto.fi](http://www.muistiliitto.fi)

**Peer support and activities:** Local memory associations and their Muistiluotsi expert and support centers

**Muistineuvo support helpline** is available in Finnish at **09 8766 550**