



The word dementia describes a number of symptoms that may include memory loss and changes in mood or behaviour. They may also include difficulties with thinking, language and problem-solving.

## Get support

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) provides the main source of supports for all types of dementia. For example, they provide one-to-one dementia nurse advice, online support groups and family carer training.

### Contact ASI on

- › Freephone Confidential National Helpline: 1800 341 341
- › Email: [helpline@alzheimer.ie](mailto:helpline@alzheimer.ie)
- › Website: [www.alzheimer.ie](http://www.alzheimer.ie)

### For more information and support

- › The DSiDC provide education, training and information on best practice in dementia care. For more information visit [www.dementia.ie](http://www.dementia.ie)
- › <https://irishheart.ie/your-health/our-health-programmes/>
- › HSE helpline: 1850 24 1850



Dementia Services Information and Development Centre  
6th Floor, Mercer's Institute for Successful Ageing  
St James's Hospital, James's Street  
Dublin 8, D08 E9P6

[www.dementia.ie](http://www.dementia.ie)



# Vascular dementia



**DSiDC**  
Dementia Services Information  
and Development Centre



# Vascular dementia

**Damage to the brain can occur when blood vessels become narrowed or blocked. This causes less oxygen and nutrition to reach parts of the brain. This can lead to the loss of brain cells.**

Damage to the brain can also be caused by a stroke. A stroke is caused by a blocked artery or a leaking or burst blood vessel.

If the brain damage caused by these vascular problems is severe enough, it can affect how you function in daily life. This is known as vascular dementia.

## Symptoms

The main symptoms of vascular dementia are:

- › Experiencing difficulties with planning or organising
- › Having trouble making decisions or carrying out tasks with many steps (such as cooking a meal)
- › Thinking more slowly
- › Having problems with attention and concentration
- › Experiencing short periods of confusion
- › Feeling sleepy during the day
- › Being easily agitated or upset
- › Being unsteady on your feet

## Treatment

To treat vascular dementia, you can make changes to your lifestyle. Examples of these changes are:

- › Do more exercise – 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week.
- › Do not smoke.
- › Keep the amount of alcohol you drink within healthy limits. This is 11 standard drinks for women and 14 standard drinks for men, spread over a week.
- › Eat a healthy diet. Eat more fruit, vegetables and oily fish. Eat less red meat and avoid sugary, fatty foods.
- › Correct any hearing loss you may have with hearing aids.

Other conditions can make vascular problems worse. These include:

- › High cholesterol
- › High blood pressure
- › High blood sugars

These can all be treated with medicines and by adopting a healthy lifestyle. Improving your general health can slow the progression of vascular dementia.

Sometimes a person who has vascular dementia can also have Alzheimer's disease. This is known as 'mixed dementia'. Alzheimer's disease is a progressive illness and your doctor may prescribe medicines to help with the symptoms.

## Living well

It is important that both you and your family, or carer, look for information and support after a diagnosis of vascular dementia.

- › Understanding the disease helps you plan for the future.
- › Be hopeful in your outlook.
- › Maintain good levels of physical activity or even increase them.
- › Look after your mental health
- › Be aware that infections (for example, chest and urine infections) can cause serious complications. Any infections should be treated by a doctor as soon as possible.
- › Keep connected with your friends and families where possible.
- › Look for supports. Consider contacting your Public Health Nurse or local Dementia Advisor.
- › Changes to your environment can make your life easier. For example, de-cluttering your home can make it easier to find things.
- › Live one day at a time.

