

Understanding and caring for our patients with dementia

Care of the Elderly and Dementia

Patient Information Leaflet

Hospital environments can be disorientating for a person with dementia, and may make them appear more confused than usual. However, there is much that can be done to help them adapt to their new environment.

This leaflet covers some of the issues that may be experienced by the person with dementia, and how together we can support and care for them.

What is dementia?

Dementia is a common condition. The risk of developing dementia increases as you get older, and the condition usually occurs in people over the age of 65.

Dementia is a syndrome (a group of related symptoms) associated with an ongoing decline of the brain and its abilities. This includes problems with:

- memory loss
- thinking speed
- mental agility
- language
- understanding
- judgement

The most common types of dementia are Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, and Lewy Body dementia, although there are many more.

Symptoms and Feelings of Dementia

Symptoms	Feelings
Speech problems	Frustrated, troubled
Memory loss	Anxious, afraid
Disorientation	Panic, lost
Aggression	Frustration, angry
Walking about	Restless, agitated
Hallucination	Confused, fear
Task problems	Angry, may not cooperate

Being in hospital may make the symptoms of dementia worse and this causes concerns for family and friends.

This can be caused by a combination of problems, such as:

- Being out of normal environment and routine.
- Pain, e.g. following a fall, broken bone, post-surgery.
- Additional illnesses, e.g. urine infection, chest infection.
- Being in a room with others.
- Noise and bustle of a busy ward.
- Medication.
- Progression of dementia itself.

How can we help?

By communication:

- It is important that all members of our team are aware of your loved ones' dementia and get to know them well as quickly as possible.
- We ask our patient's family and friends to complete a **Forget Me Not** passport. It asks simple questions such as: likes and dislikes, what scares them, what do they like doing.

- Opt to join the **Butterfly Scheme**, a discreet way to ensure the person with dementia is safe and cared for in a person-centred way.
- Consider being part of **John's Campaign** where family and carers are encouraged to stay with the person with dementia/cognitive impairment/delirium. They are welcome to support the planning, care decisions, and delivery of person-centred care for the person, while being their advocate too.

Ways to help (continued):

Practical assistance:

- Ensure spectacles are kept clean and hearing aids are working.
- Bring in the person's own clothes, if possible.
- Bring in enjoyable pastimes/reminiscence items, eg. books / cards / music.
- Keep the area clutter-free.
- Inform staff if alternative forms of communication are required such as touch / visual aids.
- Let staff know a preferred name.

Providing Reassurance:

- Familiar objects, such as photographs of family/pets on lockers can be very reassuring. They can provide a talking point for staff.
- Provide a note book, so that staff and visitors can write down messages/reminders.

Eating and Drinking:

- The hospital operates a protective meal time to create a calm/relaxed environment to enjoy meals. Staff are happy to help with assistance at mealtimes, or family/friends are welcome to assist as part of John's Campaign.
- There is a Dementia Menu available, in conjunction with the Butterfly Scheme, which provides finger food options and extra snacks to encourage appetites. Please ask staff for further details.

Each person with dementia is a unique individual with their own individual experiences of life, their own needs and feelings, and their own likes and dislikes.

Although some symptoms of dementia are common to everyone, dementia affects each person in different ways.

We all need to feel valued and respected and it is important for a person with dementia to feel that they still have an important part to play in life and are respected.

We hope this leaflet supports you and your family whilst on our ward.

We aim to provide a high quality caring environment. Your comments would be greatly appreciated and should be addressed to the nurse in charge.

If at any time you feel unable to speak to ward staff about concerns and you would like to speak to a Matron please ask the ward staff or telephone switchboard and they will help you.

If you would like any further advice or information please contact the Care of the Elderly Teams on:

Royal Lancaster Infirmary: 0781003765

Furness General Hospital: 0781003764

Email: Dementia.CoTE@mbht.nhs.uk

Leaflet Details

Approved by: PD & ILG

Date of Publication: 21/09/2016

Reference Number: PIL/043

Author: Dianne Smith

Review Date: 01/09/2019



Other formats

If you would like to receive this information in an alternative format, then please contact : 01539 795497.

Travelling to our hospitals

For the best way to plan your journey visit our website:
<http://www.UHMB.nhs.uk/> or contact Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS): 01539 795497.

Useful Contact Details

NHS 111 (for 24 hour urgent health advice): telephone 111

Your Information

If you would like to know how we use, share, disclose and secure your information and your rights of access to the information we hold about you, visit the Trust's website: <http://www.UHMB.nhs.uk/> or contact Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01539 795497.

Evidence

Details of the evidence used in writing this leaflet are available on request from: Patient Information Officer at 01524 512476.

Feedback

We appreciate and encourage feedback. If you need advice or are concerned about any aspect of care or treatment, please speak to a member of staff or contact PALS on 01539 795497.

UHMBT is a no smoking Trust. Smoking is not permitted on any of the hospital sites. You can contact the NHS North Lancashire Stop Smoking services on the number below:

NHS Quit Squad - **0800 328 6297**

If you live in Cumbria, please call **0300 013 3000** to find a local pharmacy who are offers 1-2-1 support and nicotine replacement therapy.

University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay Trust: a great place to be cared for; a great place to work.