

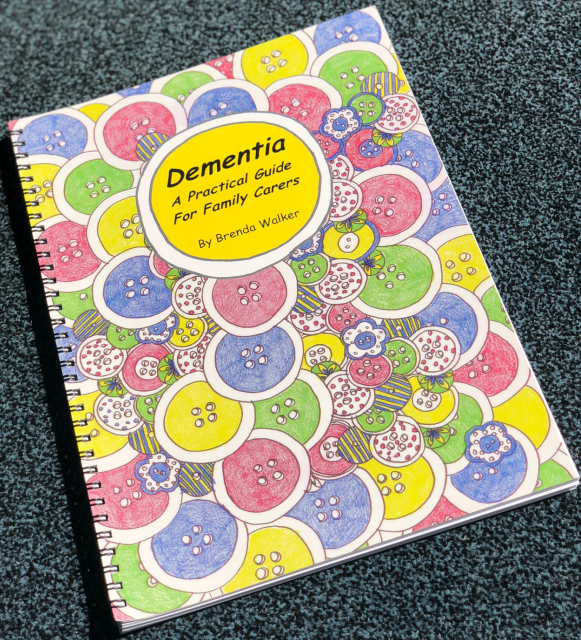
Dementia - A Practical Guide For Family Carers by Brenda Walker

This book is published by Milly's Foundation and is a practical help for those carers looking after a family member or friend at home.

Available from: The Connaught
Care Home or

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Price: £12.99



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Milly's Foundation

**Alderney's Dementia Charity
providing training and support for
professionals and carers**



- Are you - or someone you care about feeling anxious about memory issues?
- Do you know how to recognise, understand and manage these issues?
- Would you like confidential help, information and/or support?

It's normal to become a bit forgetful as you get older. However, memory loss could be a symptom of something more serious and should be checked by a GP.

Memory loss can be distressing for the person affected, and their family. Relatives may fear the worst and assume it's caused by dementia, but this often isn't the case.

The following information will help you understand:

- what to do if you're worried about memory loss
- how to tell if it could be caused by dementia
- the most common causes of memory loss (but don't rely on this to self-diagnose a condition)
- how to cope with a poor memory

What to do if you're worried about memory loss

Please see your GP if you're worried because you or someone you care for has memory difficulties. They'll do an initial assessment and ask questions about symptoms, family history and lifestyle.

Memory loss has a wide range of possible causes, depending on the type of memory loss.

If your GP thinks you or your relative needs an assessment for dementia, or that there may be another underlying condition, they will refer you to a specialist.

Could memory loss be dementia?

If you're reading this because you think your memory problems may be a sign of dementia, rest assured that they probably aren't. A person with dementia won't usually be aware of their memory loss and may deny it.

Memory loss is likely to be caused by something much more common and treatable, such as depression.

You may be worried that someone you care for has dementia. However, bear in mind that it is estimated that only 1 in 14 people over 65 develop dementia which rises to 1 in 6 of the over 80's.

As a general guide:

- Dementia usually occurs in people over the age of 65
- The memory loss doesn't happen suddenly, but gets gradually worse over time
- Someone with dementia will struggle to remember immediate or recent events, but can still recall events that happened a long time ago. Thus if it's their long-term memory that is poor, it probably isn't dementia

Common causes of memory loss

GPs find that people who see them about memory loss are more likely to have:

- anxiety
- stress
- depression

Their memory loss may be a result of poor concentration and not noticing things in the first place because of a lack of interest. Sleeping problems often make the memory loss worse.



Tips for coping with a poor memory

- Keep everyday items, such as car keys, in the same place and try to do things in the same order each time
- Write information down and keep paper and a pencil near the phone.
- Keep a diary at home as well as at work to remind you to do daily tasks
- Use an alarm to help you remember to do something in the future, such as taking something out of the oven
- Repeat important information you need to remember back to someone