



Learn more about the types of dementia with our lesson '[Different Types of Dementia](#)'.

Responsive behaviours

The behavioural changes associated with dementia are often called 'responsive behaviours,' as they may be responses to specific situations, interactions with particular people, physical sensations or emotions, or unmet needs. These behaviours may be uncharacteristic of the person's usual behaviour, such as aggressive behaviour in a typically gentle person. The responses result from changes in the brain that affect memory, judgement, orientation, mood, and behaviour. It's important for the health care team and care partners to try to assess if there might be pain, a medical illness, or other important changes that might be triggering the behaviours.

Several non-medication strategies can help, including avoiding places or situations that might trigger responsive behaviours, using distraction or changing the environment, being aware of body language and tone of voice, maintaining regular schedules and routines, and improving sleep. Healthcare professionals can help evaluate non-medication strategies and the benefits and risks of using medications for responsive behaviours. Generally, non-medication strategies are the first-line approach, as medications are not the most effective way of treating responsive behaviours and carry risks of adverse effects. It is important to carefully assess and review the risks and benefits of using medications with the person who has dementia and their substitute decision-maker if they are no longer capable of making their own decisions.

Home supports and safety

The impact on cognitive function means that many everyday tasks become risky for those with dementia. For example, if people lose the ability to recognize their environment, they may become disoriented, wander, and become lost. Driving is a complicated skill, and even mild cognitive impairment may render a person medically unfit to drive. Cooking and

specific health conditions, such as depression, hearing and vision loss, sleep issues, and medication side effects, can also impact a person's risk of cognitive impairment.

Being a caregiver for a person with dementia is one of the most challenging roles in society. Caregivers are more likely to experience physical and psychological stress, anxiety, and depression. Key aspects of caregiver wellness include maintaining good health, taking regular breaks, finding support, avoiding social isolation, and understanding dementia better. With increased knowledge about dementia and practical and emotional supports, caregivers can lead the best lives possible.

[Learn more](#) about how to promote brain health with our [les\[me\]-2 \(dsc.6ab-9-1m7-\(2m0e-9a\)171i\)\[me\]-9Tctnho](#)