
WHAT IS DEMENTIA?

Many seniors do not develop dementia – it is not the norm. However, within nursing care facilities, some dementia is evident within approximately 50% of the population. Usually the dementia is mild and hardly noticeable. Seniors with more obvious cases of dementia are usually cared for in Alzheimer or Dementia Units.

Dementia is a word used to describe a group of diseases of the brain. The symptoms include:

- Gradually increasing memory impairment:
 - short-term memory loss
 - progressive backwards-in-time degeneration
- Confused thinking
 - scrambled thoughts
 - fixations
 - depth perception
- Difficulty in learning
 - inability to understand new concepts or ideas
- Changes in behaviour, such as becoming uncommonly quiet and withdrawn or uncommonly frustrated and angry.

Diseases of the brain which bring on dementia include:

- Alzheimer disease, which occurs when there is damage to the neurons in certain parts of the brain, upsetting the signals between brain cells
- Many small strokes, which cause brain cells to die
- Rare brain disorders
- Alcohol abuse