

WHAT CHANGES TO EXPECT IN DEMENTIA

One of the hardest parts of dementia caregiving is not knowing what may be coming next.

While every person is different, dementia often brings gradual changes in memory, communication, behavior, daily care needs, and physical abilities over time.

This simple guide can help you know what kinds of changes you may begin to notice.

Important Reminder:

Not everyone will experience every change, and not all types of dementia progress the same way.

Early Changes You May Notice

- ☐ Forgetfulness or repeating questions
- ☐ Trouble finding words
- ☐ Misplacing things more often
- ☐ Difficulty with bills, medications, or schedules
- ☐ Increased frustration, anxiety, or withdrawal
- ☐ More trouble with new tasks or changes in routine

Middle Changes You May Notice

- ☐ More confusion about time or place
- ☐ Needing more help with bathing, dressing, or toileting
- ☐ More agitation, fear, or emotional changes
- ☐ Wandering or unsafe decisions
- ☐ Trouble following directions
- ☐ More noticeable changes in sleep, eating, or behavior

Later Changes You May Notice

- ☐ Needing help with most or all daily care
- ☐ More difficulty walking, standing, or swallowing
- ☐ More sleeping or less communication
- ☐ Weight loss or reduced appetite
- ☐ More incontinence or bowel/bladder changes
- ☐ Increased risk of falls, infections, or skin breakdown

Caregiver Tip

You do not have to predict every change ahead of time.

But understanding the general path of dementia can help you feel more prepared and a little less blindsided.

Even small changes are worth noticing.

What to Watch for Over Time

- ☐ Needing more help than before
- ☐ More confusion or less awareness
- ☐ More changes in behavior or mood
- ☐ Changes in walking, balance, or strength
- ☐ Changes in eating, drinking, or swallowing
- ☐ Increased caregiver stress or burnout

It May Be Time for More Help If...

- ☐ Your loved one cannot be left alone safely
 - ☐ Daily care is becoming harder to manage
 - ☐ Safety concerns are increasing
 - ☐ You feel overwhelmed most days
 - ☐ You are constantly in “high alert” mode
- Getting more help does not mean you are failing.
It means the care needs may be changing.

Want more help understanding dementia?

Explore the Understanding Dementia Course [here](#)

Want a better way to track changes over time?

Learn more about The Caregiver's Notebook [here](#)

Need more dementia caregiver help?

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