



Caregiver's Answers, Topics, and Helpful Information

In an effort to continually assist caregivers in their search for pertinent information regarding eldercare, our Family Caregiver Support Coordinator addresses topics of most frequently asked questions via **Caregiver's Answers, Topics and Helpful Information (CATHI)**. Additionally, caregivers are also invited to e-mail individual questions to the Family Caregiver Support Coordinator at caregiver2@senior-resources-guilford.org.

How Dementia is different from normal aging?

Many of us get a little more forgetful as we get older. Most people need a bit longer to remember things, get distracted more easily or struggle to multi-task as well as they once did. This may become noticeable particularly from middle age, usually during our 40s, 50s and early 60s onwards.

These changes are quite normal, but they can be a frustrating at times. However, you may worry that these things are an early sign of dementia. It is important not to worry about this. For most people, these changes will be the result of normal aging.

Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are not a normal part of aging. Alzheimer's is a type of dementia that affects memory, thinking, and behavior. It is a degenerative disease of the brain, causing symptoms to develop slowly and get worse over time. Age-associated memory impairment and dementia can be told apart in a number of ways. Below are some examples:

Signs of Normal Aging	Signs of Dementia
Sometimes forgetting names or appointments, but remembering them later	Memory loss that disrupts daily life
Making occasional errors when balancing a checkbook	Challenges in planning or solving problems
Needing occasional help to use the settings on a microwave or to record a television show	Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work or at leisure
Confused about the day of the week but recalling it later	Confusion with time or place
Vision changed related to cataracts	Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships
Sometimes have trouble finding the right word	New problems with words in speaking or writing
Misplacing things from time to time and retracing steps to find them	Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps
Making a bad decision once in a while	Decreased or poor judgement
Sometimes feeling weary at work, family and social obligations	Withdrawal from work or social activities
Developing very specific ways of doing things and become irritable when a routine is disrupted	Changes in mood and personality

Tips for coping with normal age-related memory difficulties:

- Keep a routine
- Organize information (keep details in a calendar or day planner)
- Put items in the same spot (always put your keys in the same place by the door)
- Repeat information (repeat names when you meet people)
- Run through the alphabet in your head to help you remember a word
- Make associations (relate new information to things you already know)
- Involve your senses (if you are a visual learner, visualize an item)
- Teach others or tell them stories
- Get a full night's sleep

If you notice any of the warning signs of dementia, do not ignore them or hesitate to make an appointment with your doctor. Early detection can help delay the progression of the disease and treatment can help maintain independence longer.

The information in this article was adapted from HTS your partner in therapy, 2016.

****If you would like to join our mailing list to learn more about programs and services available to you contact our Family Caregiver Support Coordinator at caregiver2@senior-resources-quilford.org***

For referrals to community organizations in Guilford County that assist older adults and caregivers, contact Senior Resources of Guilford's SeniorLine at (336) 884-6981 in High Point, all other areas (336) 333-6981 or the Caregiver Support Coordinator, at (336) 373-4816 in Greensboro or (336) 883-3586 in High Point.



North Carolina Family Caregiver Support Program
Completing the Care