

Understanding Different Types of Dementia

As we age, it's normal to lose some neurons in the brain. People living with dementia, however, experience far greater loss. Many neurons stop working, lose connections with other brain cells, and eventually die. At first, symptoms can be mild, but they get worse over time. Read on to learn more about four different types of dementia.



TYPES OF DEMENTIA

Alzheimer's Disease

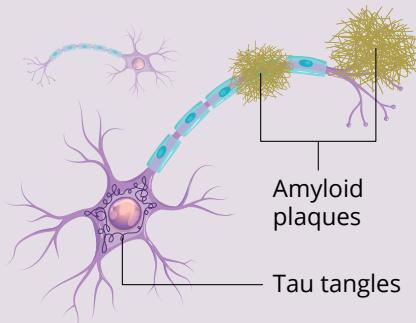
Frontotemporal Dementia

Lewy Body Dementia

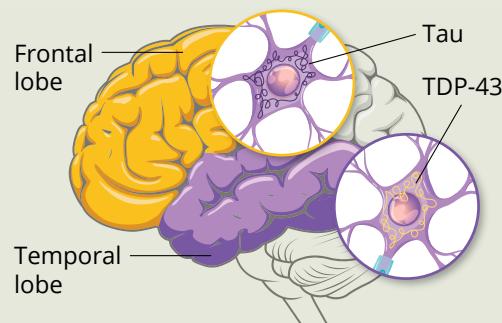
Vascular Dementia

What Is Happening in the Brain?*

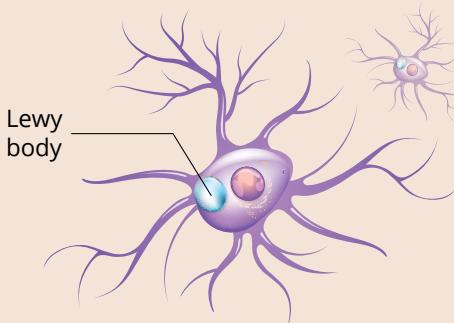
Abnormal deposits of proteins form amyloid plaques and tau tangles throughout the brain.



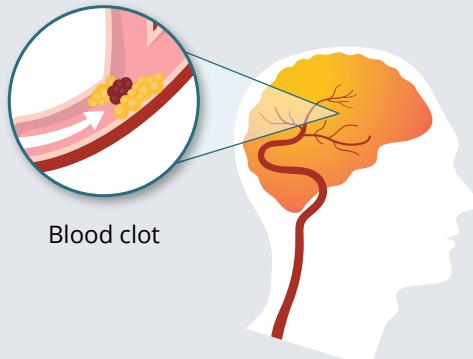
Abnormal amounts or forms of tau and TDP-43 proteins accumulate inside neurons in the frontal and temporal lobes.



Abnormal deposits of the alpha-synuclein protein, called "Lewy bodies," affect the brain's chemical messengers.



Conditions, such as blood clots, disrupt blood flow in the brain.



*These changes are just one piece of a complex puzzle that scientists are studying to understand the underlying causes of these forms of dementia and others.

Symptoms

Mild

- Wandering and getting lost
- Repeating questions

Moderate

- Problems recognizing friends and family
- Impulsive behavior

Severe

- Cannot communicate

Behavioral and Emotional

- Difficulty planning and organizing
- Impulsive behaviors
- Emotional flatness or excessive emotions

Movement Problems

- Shaky hands
- Problems with balance and walking

Language Problems

- Difficulty making or understanding speech

There are several types of frontotemporal disorders, and symptoms can vary by type.

Cognitive Decline

- Inability to concentrate, pay attention, or stay alert
- Disorganized or illogical ideas

Movement Problems

- Muscle rigidity
- Loss of coordination
- Reduced facial expression

Sleep Disorders

- Insomnia
- Excessive daytime sleepiness

Visual Hallucinations

- Forgetting current or past events
- Misplacing items
- Trouble following instructions or learning new information
- Hallucinations or delusions
- Poor judgment

Typical Age of Diagnosis

Mid 60s and above, with some cases in mid-30s to 60s

Between 45 and 64

50 or older

Over 65

Diagnosis

Symptoms can be similar among different types of dementia, and some people have more than one form of dementia, which can make an accurate diagnosis difficult. Symptoms can also vary from person to person. Doctors may ask for a medical history, complete a physical exam, and order neurological and laboratory tests to help diagnose dementia.

Treatment

There is currently no cure for these types of dementia, but some treatments are available. Speak with your doctor to find out what might work best for you.

Living with dementia can be challenging, but there are ways to manage it. To learn more about these types of dementia and other conditions that can cause dementia, visit www.nia.nih.gov/health/what-is-dementia.



National Institute
on Aging