

Useful contacts

Chartered Society of Physiotherapy

14 Bedford Row
London WC1R 4ED
T 020 7306 6666
www.csp.org.uk

The College of Occupational Therapists Specialist Section - Independent Practice

T 0800 389 4873
www.cotss-ip.org.uk

Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists

2 White Hart Yard
London SE1 1NX
T 020 7378 1200
E info@rcslt.org
www.rcslt.org

Society of Chiropractors and Podiatrists

1 Fellmonger's Path
Tower Bridge Road
London SE1 3LY
T 020 7234 8620
www.feetforlife.org

Alzheimer's Society

Devon House
58 St Katharine's Way
London E1W 1LB
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alzheimers.org.uk

Reviewed in 2008 by members of the Alzheimer's Society Living with Dementia programme and revised 2010. This series of booklets has been made possible through the generous support of Francelle Bradford.
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Alzheimer's Society Dementia Helpline

England and Wales 0845 3000 336 Northern Ireland 028 9066 4100

Registered charity no. 296645 A company limited by guarantee and registered in England no. 2115499
1503

Who are all these health professionals?



If you have been diagnosed with dementia, you may need to see several different doctors who can help you with your condition. Like everyone, you may also have other problems with your health from time to time, which are nothing to do with your dementia. It can be confusing seeing many different health professionals in different places. This booklet explains who these health professionals are, what they do and how they can help you.

General practitioners (GPs)

You should go to your GP first if you have any worries about your health. You can see your GP in their surgery, or they may visit you at home. You should always keep the number of your GP surgery somewhere near your telephone.

Your GP can:

- talk to you about your symptoms and problems
- carry out a physical examination
- arrange further tests with a consultant or hospital specialist
- review whether your drugs are working.

Discuss your concerns with your GP and he will refer you to the right specialised health professional

For practical information on all aspects of living with dementia contact the National Dementia Helpline on 0845 3000 336 (England and Wales) or 028 9066 4100 (Northern Ireland) or visit alzheimers.org.uk

Tips for visiting the GP

- Write down what you want to discuss before you go. It can be difficult to remember everything you want to say.
- Make a note of anything important the doctor says. You might want to write down any medical terms, for example.
- Ask the doctor to explain in simpler language if you do not understand.
- If you come from a different background or culture from your GP, mention any relevant customs, attitudes or beliefs.
- Do telephone the surgery after the appointment if there is anything you have forgotten to ask. You may be able to speak to the doctor on the telephone rather than make another appointment.



Community nurses

Community nurses work alongside GPs, social workers and therapists. There are different types of community nurses and they have different titles. Here are some explanations of the different types.

Practice nurses

Most GP surgeries have a practice nurse.

The practice nurse:

- carries out general treatments (including dressings, injections, ear care)
- runs clinics (such as managing asthma and preventing heart disease)
- looks after patients with ongoing illness (such as diabetes).

You can see the practice nurse at the GP surgery. Telephone the receptionist for an appointment.

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District nurses

District nurses have had extra training in nursing people at home. They often work with healthcare assistants to provide nursing at home and at local clinics. Ask your GP if you want to contact a district nurse.

Health visitors

Health visitors have had specific training in how to help people stay well. They can give you information on local health services and suggest ways of keeping healthy. Health visitors work alongside GPs. Again, ask your GP if you want to contact a health visitor.

**District nurses hold clinics or
will make a visit to your home**

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Community psychiatric nurses (CPNs)

Community psychiatric nurses (CPNs) provide treatment, care and support for people with mental health problems or dementia. They can assess you at home, or you can see them at the GP surgery or a separate clinic called a mental health unit. CPNs can advise you on how to cope with your condition and how to improve your health and quality of life.

They do not normally carry out physical nursing tasks. You could be referred to a CPN from a number of sources including GPs, psychiatrists and inpatient wards or you might be able to contact a CPN directly yourself. Ask how to do this at your GP surgery.



Consultants

A consultant has more in-depth knowledge and experience of dementia. Consultants can also carry out investigations, such as brain scans and are able to prescribe drugs for dementia. Your GP will refer you to a particular type of consultant. The type of consultant you see will depend on your age, your symptoms, and what is available. You may see a neurologist, a psychiatrist, or a geriatrician. You will probably see a consultant at your local hospital.

Memory clinics

However, your GP may also make an appointment for you at a memory clinic. Here you can see different doctors and specialist nurses who can decide the best way of helping you. They can discuss your drugs with you, and suggest ways to help you live on your own for as long as possible. You may also see a social worker at a memory clinic.

At a memory clinic specialists will assess your needs and recommend the best treatment for you

Neurologists

A neurologist is a doctor who specialises in the brain and nervous system. Some neurologists have particular experience in dementia.

Geriatricians

A geriatrician looks after older people, and specialises in the physical illnesses and disabilities of old age. If you have reached retirement age, your GP might make an appointment for you to see a geriatrician to see if you have any physical illnesses as well as dementia.

General adult psychiatrists

A general adult psychiatrist diagnoses and treats many different mental health problems. If you are under retirement age, your GP may ask a general psychiatrist to see you and help confirm your diagnosis.

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The specialist team

The consultant usually works with several other doctors. You may see one of these doctors, but the consultant is still responsible for your care. The consultant also works with nurses, psychologists, occupational therapists and social workers.

Neuropsychiatrists

A neuropsychiatrist is a doctor trained in both psychiatry and neurology. They study diseases that may have both a physical and psychological cause. Neuropsychiatrists have a special interest in the way the brain affects behaviour.

Psychogeriatricians

A psychogeriatrician, or old age psychiatrist, is a psychiatrist who has had extra training in the mental health problems of older people. This can include dementia. They may also offer support to younger people with dementia.

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Physiotherapists

Physiotherapists can show you exercises to help you move around easily. You can see a physiotherapist at your local hospital, or sometimes at the GP surgery.

You may also be able to see one at home. Ask your GP to arrange an appointment for you. Some physiotherapists work privately. Look for the letters MCSP and/or SRP after their name. The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy can tell you how to get in touch with a private physiotherapist (see back cover of this booklet).



Chiropodists

Chiropodists are trained to prevent and treat medical problems with people's feet. They can also advise you on proper foot care. It is important to have healthy feet so that you can walk around easily. Ask your GP if you want to see a chiropodist. To find a private chiropodist, contact the Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists.

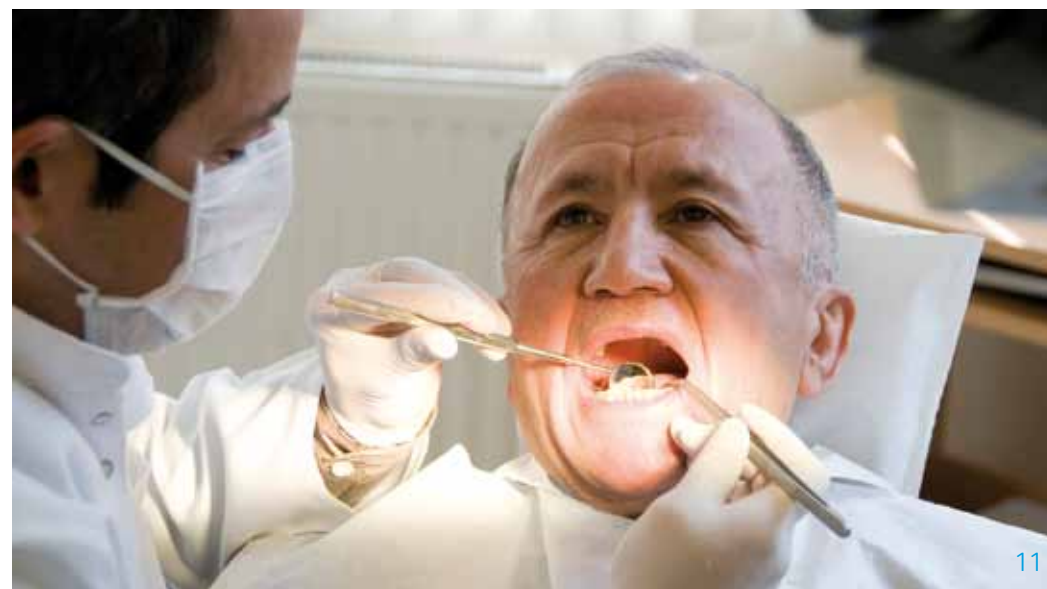
Audiologists

Audiologists can check whether you have any hearing problems and can fit a hearing aid if you need one. If you already have a hearing aid, the audiologist should check it for you regularly. Hearing tests, equipment and equipment checks are free on the NHS. Ask your GP to arrange an appointment for you at your nearest NHS hearing centre.

Hearing tests, hearing aids and equipment checks for hearing aids are all free on the NHS

Dentists

It is important to see a dentist regularly to keep your teeth and gums healthy, or to make sure your dentures are comfortable if you wear them. Your dentist may be able to visit you at home. NHS home visits are free but you might have to pay for treatment. You will find details of local NHS dentists at your GP surgery.



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Optometrists and opticians

Problems with your sight can sometimes make you feel more confused. You should have your sight checked regularly by an optometrist. They will check for any medical conditions that affect your eyes at the same time. If you do not have an optometrist, ask your GP to suggest a good one. Some optometrists will visit you at home. If you are over 60 you are entitled to a free NHS eye test. If you are under 60 and have dementia, you may also be entitled to a free NHS eye test.

Dietitians

If you are worried about poor appetite, weight loss or weight gain, vitamins or food supplements, a dietitian can provide you with information and advice. Your GP or consultant can arrange for you to see a dietitian. Some dietitians may visit you at home; others may be based at a health centre, GP practice or hospital.

**A dietitian can visit you at home
and give you valuable advice**

Clinical psychologists

Clinical psychologists assess memory, learning abilities and other skills. They also offer support to cope with any difficulties you may be experiencing. They often work with consultants in memory clinics as part of a team. Ask your GP for more information.

Speech and language therapists

Speech and language therapists can help you to communicate with other people more easily. They can also help with problems such as swallowing difficulties. Your GP can arrange an appointment for you.

**Speech and language
therapists can help you
communicate more easily**

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Occupational therapists (OTs)

Occupational therapists can tell you about adaptations and equipment that will help you to live independently for as long as possible. Ask your GP, consultant or social services if you think an occupational therapist might be able to help you. Some occupational therapists work privately. To find one, contact Occupational Therapists in Independent Practice (see back cover).

Social care

Your local social services department can arrange many helpful care services for you. These services may include equipment and adaptations, meals on wheels, home care, day care and care in a care home. Social services have to assess your needs before they can arrange care services for you. To find out about an assessment, ask your social services department (the address will be in the phone book under the name of your local authority).

Social workers

Social workers can decide what services you need. They can also offer support if you need to talk things through. Social workers work in social services departments, hospitals and care homes. To talk to a social worker, contact your social services department (the address will be in the phone book under the name of your local authority) or ask your GP. Social workers can also help sort out funding support and are the primary route for requesting continuing care funding.

Social care workers

Social care workers usually work in residential care homes or in your own home. They can help with personal care such as washing, dressing, changing bedding, doing laundry and helping with meals.

**Social workers can help
arrange funding support
for continued care**

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Who you see where

