



DementiaUK
Helping families face dementia

Practical guide to getting the most out of GP and other health appointments



When someone is diagnosed with dementia, or if they are in the process of seeking a diagnosis, they are likely to have a number of appointments with a GP, the memory service/clinic and other healthcare professionals.

This guide will help you get the most out of these appointments, with helpful questions to consider asking and space to record important information.

Questions to ask the GP or specialist

- What type of dementia has been diagnosed?
- What symptoms/changes in behaviour might occur?
- What treatments, if any, are available?
- Are there any local support groups:
 - for the person with dementia – generally, and/or specific to their type of dementia?
 - for their family/carers, including children with a parent who has young onset dementia (where symptoms develop before the age of 65)?
- Is there a schedule for follow-up appointments? With whom – eg the GP, a specialist nurse, the memory service?
- When will these take place?
- Who will book these? (ie will the clinic send a letter with appointment details, or do you need to arrange the appointment yourself?)
- Are there any local services that offer support with practical, social, financial and legal matters? The Admiral Nurse Dementia Helpline and clinics can also offer advice and support – please see Sources of support on p10

Details of appointments

Who will be the main healthcare contact? (Name, job title)

What are their contact details?

How often will you see or speak to them?

Will any further tests or scans be needed? If so, when, where, and how will you find out the results?

What (if any) medications have been prescribed and how should they be taken?

When is the next appointment?

**What other health and/or social care professionals will you see?
(Name, job title, what they do, contact details)**

Date/time/location of the next appointment

Any other notes

Other appointment notes

Type of appointment

Name of health contact

Date

Type of appointment

Name of health contact

Date

Type of appointment

Name of health contact

Date

Type of appointment

Name of health contact

Date



Remote consultations

Increasingly, medical appointments are being offered remotely by video call or phone. This became the norm during the Covid-19 pandemic and many healthcare professionals have adopted it as their usual way of working.

The information in this guide can be used for remote consultations as well as face-to-face appointments, and you can use the notes section on p4 to list anything you would like to discuss in advance.

Many people prefer in-person appointments, and they will still be necessary if physical examinations or tests are needed.

If you would prefer to see your GP or other healthcare professional face to face, ask the surgery or clinic if this can be arranged.

For more information on getting the most out of a remote consultation, please see Sources of support on p10.

Useful information for the GP or specialist

When you see the GP or specialist for a review in the future, it is helpful to take a record of the following:

- any concerns or worries you have
- any new symptoms that you have noticed – what they are, when they happen (dates/times), and any triggers you have noticed
- any hearing, visual or balance problems
- any other health issues

Consent

If you are living with a diagnosis of dementia, you may wish to give your GP consent to speak to other people about your healthcare. Let them know if you give them:

- consent to speak to your next of kin or another family member or friend – if so, ensure the healthcare professional has their contact details
- consent to share information with other health professionals (on a need-to-know basis)

You can appoint someone to be your ‘medical proxy’ or ‘trusted person’, which means they can speak to your GP on your behalf, including booking appointments for you, accessing your online medical information, and discussing treatment and support. Our leaflet on online GP services contains more information about this (please see Sources of support on p10).

It is also important to make a lasting power of attorney (LPA) for health and welfare. This appoints someone (your ‘attorney’) to make decisions about your health and care if you lose mental capacity and become unable to make them yourself (for more information, see Sources of support on p10).

Tips for healthcare appointments

Before

- If there is a particular GP you would like to see, you can request this, although this may mean waiting longer for an appointment
- Write down the most important things you want to discuss
- Make a note of any changes in symptoms or behaviour
- Make a list of any medications and other tablets you/the person you care for are taking, including over-the-counter medicines, vitamin supplements and natural remedies
- Ask someone to accompany you – this may make you feel more comfortable, and they can also share their thoughts about your situation
- If you need an interpreter or chaperone, inform the surgery in advance

During

- Make notes of important information, or ask a family member or friend to do this for you
- Don't be afraid to ask the healthcare professional to explain anything you don't understand, or repeat anything you didn't hear clearly
- If the professional recommends any websites, support groups or other services, ask them to write the details down
- Ask if you can receive a copy of any letters sent to other health professionals – this is your right

After

- If you are told to book a follow-up appointment, it is a good idea to do this before you leave the surgery
- Make sure you phone for test results, if you have been told to
- If you have been waiting some time for test results or details of your next appointment, contact the surgery/clinic to chase this up
- Consider downloading the NHS app on your phone and linking this with your GP surgery so you can see your health information, book appointments and request repeat prescriptions



Sources of support

To speak to a dementia specialist Admiral Nurse about healthcare appointments or any other aspect of dementia, please call our Helpline on **0800 888 6678** (Monday-Friday 9am-9pm, Saturday and Sunday 9am-5pm, every day except 25th December) or email helpline@dementiauk.org

To book a phone or video call appointment with an Admiral Nurse, please visit dementiauk.org/book-a-clinic-appointment

Dementia UK resources

Tests for dementia

dementiauk.org/tests-for-dementia-and-alzheimers

GP online services

dementiauk.org/gp-online-services

How to get a diagnosis of dementia

dementiauk.org/getting-a-diagnosis-of-dementia

Young onset dementia: getting a diagnosis

dementiauk.org/young-onset-dementia-getting-a-diagnosis

After a diagnosis of dementia: next steps checklist

dementiauk.org/next-steps

Young onset dementia: next steps after a diagnosis

dementiauk.org/young-onset-dementia-next-steps-after-a-diagnosis

Young Dementia Network personal checklist – for recording dementia symptoms

Getting the most out of remote consultations

dementiauk.org/remote-consultations

Lasting power of attorney

dementiauk.org/lasting-power

Mental capacity and decision-making

dementiauk.org/capacity-decision-making



Other resources

**NHS: GP appointments
and bookings**

[nhs.uk/nhs-services/gps/gp-appointments-and-bookings](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/gps/gp-appointments-and-bookings)

**NHS: referrals for
specialist care**

[nhs.uk/nhs-services/hospitals/referrals-for-specialist-care](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/hospitals/referrals-for-specialist-care)

The information in this leaflet is written and reviewed by dementia specialist Admiral Nurses. We hope you find it useful. If you have feedback, please email feedback@dementiauk.org

Publication date: November 2022

Review date: November 2024

© Dementia UK 2022

We want to ensure no one has to face dementia alone – and we can only do this because of our generous supporters. If you would like to help, please consider making a kind gift.



To donate: call **0300 365 5500**,
visit dementiauk.org/donate-to-support
or scan the QR code.

Thank you.



If you have questions or concerns about any aspect of dementia, please contact our Admiral Nurses.

Helpline: **0800 888 6678** or helpline@dementiauk.org

Virtual clinics: dementiauk.org/book-a-clinic-appointment



dementiauk.org • info@dementiauk.org

Dementia UK, 7th Floor, One Aldgate, London EC3N 1RE
Dementia UK is a registered charity in England and Wales (1039404) and Scotland (SC 047429).