



HOW TO RECOGNIZE DEMENTIA AND PREPARE YOUR HOME: A Family Guide

Dementia caregiving can put strain on any family. The time and effort required often contribute to the emotional strain of managing the condition.

This guide will help your family spot the signs of dementia early and prepare your loved one's house for the road ahead.

This guide should not replace medical advice. Talk with your doctor about any changes you notice, especially if you suspect memory loss, dementia, or Alzheimer's.



TheCourtyardAtCenterville.com

(937) 993-2187 • 10400 RANDALL PARK DR, CENTERVILLE, OH 45458



55+ ACTIVE VILLAS | INDEPENDENT LIVING | ASSISTED LIVING | MEMORY CARE

Part 1: Early Signs of Dementia vs. Normal Signs of Aging

Dementia is not a normal part of growing older, but some of the signs of dementia can mimic signs of normal aging. Telling the difference is essential to planning a loved one's care effectively. This chart can make the distinction easier to remember:

Observation	Normal Sign of Aging	Possible Dementia-Related Memory Loss
Memory Loss That Disrupts Daily Life	Forgetting a name or date but remembering it later	Forgetting learned information repeatedly without remembering it later, or repeating questions in a conversation
Challenges in Planning or Solving Problems	Occasional errors with balancing a checkbook or following a grocery list	Failing to follow a familiar recipe or forgetting monthly bills completely
Difficulty Completing Familiar Tasks	Needing help with TV options or how to answer emails	Forgetting the route to a known destination or the rules of a familiar game
Confusion With Time or Place	Saying the wrong day or month and correcting it later	Losing track of dates, seasons, or the passage of time, especially forgetting "how they got here"
Trouble With Images or Spatial Reasoning	Blurrier vision, sometimes related to cataracts	Walking or driving issues related to judging distance, saying something is the wrong color, or failing to follow text coherently

Observation	Normal Sign of Aging	Possible Dementia-Related Memory Loss
New Problems With Words or Writing	Occasionally struggling to find the right word	Stopping mid-sentence, repeating ideas, or calling familiar objects by unusual names, like calling a wall clock a "watch"
Misplacing Things and Feeling Lost	Misplacing something and retracing steps to find it later	Putting things in an unusual place, being unable to retrace steps, or accusing others of stealing objects
Decreased or Poorer Judgment	Making a financial decision you don't agree with	Giving large sums to telemarketers, neglecting monthly bills, or failing to notice poor grooming
Withdrawal From Work or Relationships	Feeling occasionally tired from work or socializing	Pulling away from favorite hobbies, friends, or family get-togethers, such as showing new disinterest in a favorite sport
Changes in Personality or Mood	Feeling irritable about disrupting a regular routine	Feeling suspicious, depressed, or afraid in an unfamiliar setting

When to Talk with a Doctor

One sign is not a diagnosis of dementia, even in the column on the far right. Other than normal signs of aging, some symptoms of dementia can be mimicked by thyroid issues, medication side effects, vitamin deficiencies, or hormone imbalances. It's always worth asking a doctor if you notice new or worsening signs related to memory.

Part 2: A Room-by-Room Checklist for Dementia Caregivers

Small changes at home can prevent falls, lower daily risk, and give seniors living with dementia more freedom. This checklist is based on evidence-based recommendations from the Alzheimer's Association and the National Institute on Aging.

Throughout the House

- ☐ Place locks above or below eye level on exterior doors, out of the direct line of sight
- ☐ Remove throw rugs, extension cords, and clutter from walkways
- ☐ Keep hallways and rooms well lit, and add night lights for evening hours
- ☐ Fasten bookshelves, dressers, and televisions to the wall so they cannot tip
- ☐ Remove firearms and other weapons, or store them locked and unloaded
- ☐ Post emergency numbers and poison control, where you can reach them fast
- ☐ Buy a "No Soliciting" sign to prevent unwanted intrusions

Kitchen

- ☐ Use knob covers, remove the knobs, or shut off the gas when the stove is not in use
- ☐ Upgrade appliances with an automatic shutoff feature
- ☐ Disconnect the garbage disposal
- ☐ Remove artificial fruit and toxic plants that could be mistaken for food
- ☐ Keep medications, vitamins, sugar substitutes, knives, and cleaning products off counters and out of reach
- ☐ Keep the pharmacy phone number clearly posted

Bathroom

- ☐ Install grab bars beside the shower, tub, and toilet
- ☐ Add non-slip strips or textured stickers to the tub and shower floor
- ☐ Set the water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit or lower to guard against burns
- ☐ Remove inside door locks, or keep a key handy, so your loved one cannot get locked in
- ☐ Consider a walk-in shower and a shower chair for easier bathing

Bedroom

- ☐ Place a chair near the bed to make dressing easier
- ☐ Keep a clear, well-lit path from the bed to the bathroom
- ☐ Consider a bed or motion sensor that alerts you if your loved one gets up at night

Preventing Wandering

- ☐ Add alarms or chimes to doors that lead outside
- ☐ Install motion sensors on the garage and exterior doors
- ☐ Keep a recent photo and a list of places your loved one might go
- ☐ Enroll in a wandering-response and ID program for added peace of mind

Bring your checklist to appointments and senior living community visits to ask about potential improvements in your loved one's specific case.



A Local Partner in Centerville, OH

The Courtyard at Centerville offers assisted living and memory care on one campus, along with respite stays through the A Day Away program. A short-term stay can give your loved one a chance to receive care in a professional setting while you and your family take a break or prepare for the next steps.

If dementia caregiving has become too difficult, or you and your family would like to prepare for the future proactively, our team can help you weigh your options. Schedule a visit to see how memory care services can support your family with local resources and a helping hand.

**Contact our team to learn
more about your options
for care in your loved
one's situation.**

(937) 993-2187

10400 Randall Park Dr, Centerville, OH 45458

TheCourtyardAtCenterville.com  