

What is Dementia ?

... and what can you do to help loved ones with Dementia

Dementia is a disease of the brain that can cause problems with memory, thinking, and actions. The disease gets worse with time and is most common in older adults.

Dementia occurs in various forms.

The most common type is Alzheimer's dementia. In Alzheimer's dementia, healthy brain tissue worsens, causing a steady decrease in memory and mental abilities. The second most common type of dementia is vascular dementia. In vascular dementia, a decline in thought-processes occurs and often includes small strokes.

Dementia can make owning a gun or driving a car dangerous ...

because the brain is not performing as well as it did in the past. Gun ownership and driving among people with dementia may lead to injury or even death.

Depression is common among people with dementia ... and increases their risk for suicide.

People 65 years and older are at a higher rate for suicide, especially by using a gun. White males 85 years and older commit suicide more than any other group.

Learn ways that you can keep your friends and family safe ...

If you have questions or concerns about dementia and safety, please talk to the Veteran's primary care provider.

VA Butler Healthcare

... providing quality health care to our nation's Veterans.

Our Primary Care VA Outpatient Clinics

Armstrong Co. VA Outpatient Clinic

Klingensmith Building
313 Ford Street, Suite 2B
Ford City, PA 16226
724-763-4090

Clarion Co. VA Outpatient Clinic

AC Valley Medical Center
855 Route 58, Ste. One
Parker, PA 16049
724-659-5601

Cranberry Twp. VA Outpatient Clinic

Freedom Square
1183 Freedom Road, Ste. A101
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
724-741-3131

Lawrence Co. VA Outpatient Clinic

Ridgewood Professional Centre
1750 New Butler Road
New Castle, PA 16101
724-598-6080

Michael A. Marzano VA Outpt. Clinic

295 North Kerrwood Dr., Ste. 110
Hermitage, PA 16148
724-346-1569



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Dealing with Dementia



Firearms & Driving Safety

Keeping friends and family safe

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How do I recognize signs of Dementia?

Some changes in memory, thinking and action are normal as people age. However, some changes are not normal and may need some extra attention in order to slow down and cope with the changes and make them easier.

If you know someone who is beginning to have memory/thinking problems that are interfering with their life, **help them by talking with them to their primary care provider.** Their primary care provider can perform an evaluation — or may refer them to other professionals for more information — to see if they have dementia.



Common Signs of Dementia

- Short term memory loss
- Difficulty performing familiar tasks and/or recognizing familiar people and places
- Changes in mood and/or personality
- Disorientation in time and place
- Poor judgment
- Loss of initiative
- Not keeping up personal hygiene

Safety First! Keeping loved ones safe from harm...

Firearm Safety

42% of U.S. households own firearms ... equaling to about 235 million firearms.

Accidents are the fifth leading cause of death in the United States; each year **over 1,000 firearm accidents** result in death. It is important to take safety precautions and recognize the danger guns possess, especially to those suffering from dementia.

Staying Safe with Guns in the Home

- Keep your guns in a sturdy, locked cabinet
- Remove the firing pin from the gun
- Store guns unloaded
- Store ammunition in a locked, fireproof safe, separate from the location of the gun
- Use a gun lock on all firearms
- Keep all keys for gun locks, gun cabinet, and ammunition hidden from people with dementia

How do I keep someone who may have Dementia safe from a firearm?

The best way to protect someone who may have dementia is to **remove the gun from the home.** Consider keeping the gun(s) at a neighbor's home, selling them or taking them to the police to be destroyed.

Driving Safety

There are more than six million car accidents each year in the U.S. ... and elderly drivers account for more fatal car accidents than any other age group.

You can help keep your loved one suffering from dementia safe by talking to them about driving safety and helping them to give up driving when it becomes necessary.

When do I know if someone who may have Dementia should stop driving?

Eventually, all people with dementia must stop driving for safety reasons. Pay close attention to the warning signs of driving difficulty — to determine if it's time for someone who may have dementia to give up driving.

Warning Signs of driving difficulty

If you are unsure where to begin ...

start by talking with the Veteran's primary care provider who can provide an expert opinion.

- Getting lost in familiar places
- Near misses
- Moving violations/warnings
- Confusing brake/gas pedals
- Incorrect signaling
- Trouble making turns
- Running traffic signals
- Difficulty staying in one lane

They may recommend a driving evaluation for more information about the Veteran's driving safety.