

GUIDE · 6 MIN READ

What to ask the doctor about dementia

If you're worried about a parent or loved one's memory, the doctor appointment matters. These are the 20 questions US family caregivers tell us they wish they'd asked sooner.

Getting a diagnosis

1. What tests are needed to confirm whether this is dementia? Will you order labs, imaging, and a cognitive assessment?
2. Could the symptoms be caused by something else (UTI, medication, depression, B12 / thyroid issues)?
3. How long will it take to get a referral to neurology or a memory care clinic?
4. Will the diagnosis tell us which type of dementia it is (Alzheimer's, vascular, Lewy body, frontotemporal)?

Treatment and medication

1. Are there medications (donepezil, memantine, lecanemab) that could help slow symptoms?
2. What are the side effects we should watch for?
3. Will any current medications need to be changed or stopped (anticholinergics, benzodiazepines)?
4. How often should medication be reviewed? Will you coordinate with the pharmacy and neurologist?

Day-to-day support

1. Who else will be involved in their care (geriatric care manager, home health, social worker)?
2. Can you write an order for a home health evaluation so Medicare will cover PT, OT, and a home safety check?
3. What support is available for me as the family caregiver?
4. Is my loved one safe to drive? When does that need to be reviewed, and do we need to notify the state DMV?

Planning ahead

1. Should we set up Durable Power of Attorney and a Health Care Proxy now?
2. When is the right time to discuss advance directives and a POLST / MOLST form?
3. What financial support might we be entitled to (Medicaid waivers, VA Aid & Attendance, SSDI for early-onset)?
4. How do we connect with the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 helpline (1-800-272-3900) and local support groups?

Red flags to watch for

1. What symptoms mean we should contact you urgently?
2. When should we go to the ER rather than waiting for a clinic appointment?
3. How do we manage a sudden change in behavior or confusion (often a UTI or new medication)?
4. Who do we call after hours — the nurse line, 211, or 911?

Take the questions into the appointment

The Care Companion's Doctor Prep tool builds a personalized question list, tracks symptoms in a daily checklist, and creates a one-page summary you can hand the doctor. 7-day free trial, \$4.99/month after.

[Start free trial](#)

Information here is general guidance for US family caregivers and is not a substitute for medical advice. Always speak to your doctor or call 211 (community resources) or 911 (emergency) for urgent concerns.

Free guide from The Care Companion — practical tools for families caring for someone with dementia. More guides at thecarecompanion.com/guides