

A guide for pharmacists

Why should you care?

There are currently 64,000 people living with dementia in Ireland. 30 people develop the disease every day and over 500,000 families have been affected. The majority of people with dementia (63%) live in the community and want to continue to be active and included. Pharmacists provide a key service for people with dementia and their family carers, and customers will often ask staff for advice about the condition, medication management and what supports are available. Do not underestimate the difference you can make by having an understanding of dementia and the practical ways you can support your customers with dementia and their families. People with dementia say that it is the personal interactions which make the biggest difference to their experience.

What are some of the symptoms of dementia?

Everyday challenges differ for people with dementia; in relation to medication management they may have a range of difficulties, such as:



1. Remembering to take medication, taking them at the right times, the right dose or where they are stored

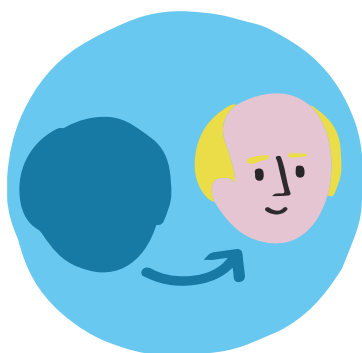


2. Managing their existing medications



3. Getting prescriptions renewed from their GP or repeatedly returning with prescription renewals

There are simple things you can do to support your customer:



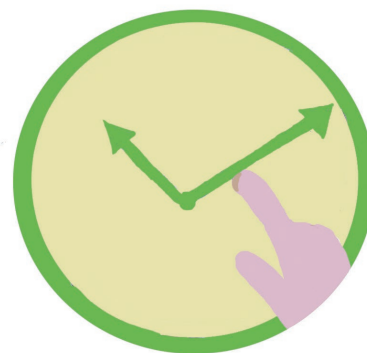
See the person, not the dementia

Dementia does not define the person. Behind the dementia is an individual who may need a little support and understanding.



It's good to talk

Ask the person how they are getting on and encourage them to let you know if they are experiencing any new difficulties or changes.



Take time

Ensure that you explain what their medications are for and how to take them, making clear the prescribed frequency and dosage.



Body language

Smile warmly, make eye contact and let people know you are there to help.



Practical suggestions

There are lots of practical resources available like phones, apps, diaries and blister packs that you can suggest to people. Ask people to tell you about their own tips for remembering to take medication.



Provide information

Provide information about dementia as this may enable people to get some practical tips and supports available locally, such as Memory Technology Resource Rooms. Raise awareness for the little things we all can do to support a person in their community.

Dementia Inclusive Communities

To find out more about the things you can do in your community, training and other resources visit the HSE's www.understandtogether.ie/get-involved/

dementia

understand together

Everyone has a role to play in making our communities inclusive. Often it is the small things and acts of kindness that make the biggest difference in a person's life.