



Geriatric Fast Facts

Topic: Types of Dementia

DEMENTIA is a broad term used to refer to a large group of conditions that result in memory and functional impairment. The most common types of dementia in Canada are:

Type of Dementia	Prevalence	Onset	Characteristics	Treatment
Alzheimer's Dementia (AD)	64%	Gradual onset and progressive	<p>Impaired Short Term Memory with one or more of the following:</p> <p>Impaired executive function, impaired visual processing, impairment of skilled motor activities</p>	*No cure, but approved cholinesterase inhibitors such as : Aricept, Reminyl or Exelon. Ebixa may be used in late stage dementia
Vascular Dementia & Vascular/AD Mixed Dementia	19%	Stepwise progression	<p>Symptoms vary, depending on the portion of the brain affected but may include:</p> <p>Confusion/agitation, Problems with language and memory, Unsteady gait, Personality and mood changes</p>	No cure, however, drugs used to treat AD also seem to help people with vascular dementia. Ebixa may often be prescribed concurrently with a cholinesterase inhibitor
Lewy Body Dementia	15%	Gradual onset with increasingly rapid progression	<p>Symptoms include:</p> <p>Changes in alertness/attention, hallucinations, parkinson's disease like symptoms, confusion, memory loss, depression</p>	No cure, but medications may be used to treat Parkinsonism, depression, and unpleasant hallucinations. *Cholinesterase inhibitors may improve alertness and cognition in some people and may reduce hallucinations and other distressing symptoms
Frontotemporal Dementia	2%	Sudden onset – usually at earlier age (i.e., 50's)	A syndrome of diseases that typically fall into 2 categories: changes in behaviour (change in personality) or problems with language (executive function)	No cure, but behaviour modification may help control difficult behaviours. Aggressive, agitated or dangerous behaviours may require medication.
Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus	Less than 3%	Rapid onset but reversible	<p>A triad of symptoms:</p> <p>Urinary incontinence, gait disturbance, confusion and Short Term Memory loss</p>	Treatment involves surgical placement of a shunt in the brain to drain excess CSF into the abdomen where it can be absorbed