

Getting assessed for a dementia diagnosis and what to do next



I would like to get an assessment for a dementia diagnosis, or support someone I know to get one.




A. Who can I see to receive an initial cognitive assessment?

An initial cognitive assessment is generally completed by a GP and involves taking a medical history and completing a physical examination and cognitive screening test. If the GP is concerned about the possibility of dementia, they may refer you to a Memory Clinic or specialist doctor for a more in-depth assessment.

Who can help me?	What do I need to do?	Done
General practitioner (GP)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in memory and thinking can have a number of possible causes and may not be related to dementia. To discuss if your symptoms may be related to dementia, see a GP. <p><i>*If you already see a private geriatrician, neurologist or psychiatrist, you can speak to them instead of a GP</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask for a longer appointment. Take a family member or friend with you. Take a list of the changes you have been experiencing, including when they first started, and how often they occur. Take a list of current medications and dosage. Ask about the benefit of seeking a diagnosis and the process. If you would like to be assessed for a diagnosis, discuss the option of further assessment by a Memory Clinic or private specialist. <i>(If the GP does not refer you to a Memory Clinic, you can also refer yourself.)</i> 	




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Who can help me?	What do I need to do?	Done
Bendigo Health Regional Community Dementia Service		
<p><i>If you are unable to see a GP, or would prefer to see someone in your home, you can contact the community dementia service.</i></p> <p>The community dementia service can provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A cognitive assessment in your home • Advice about cognitive changes and diagnosis <p><i>*If you have a Home Care Package through My Aged Care, speak to your case manager before contacting this service.</i></p>	<p>Contact: 03 5454 8078 (Community Nursing Services)</p> <p>Visit online: bendigohealth.org.au/services/detail/3249</p>	

B. Who can I see to receive a formal assessment for a dementia diagnosis?

A formal assessment is carried out by a specialist health professional or a team of specialists at a Memory Clinic. They will complete an in-depth assessment, including a more detailed test of mental functioning and possibly conduct brain scans and blood tests. They are able to provide a dementia diagnosis.

Who can help me?	What do I need to do?	Done
Bendigo Health Cognitive Dementia and Memory Service (CDAMS) clinic (also known as the “Memory Clinic”)		
<p>They can provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal assessment and diagnosis • Information on treatment • Education • Support and referral to services <p><i>*If you already see a private geriatrician, neurologist or psychiatrist, you can speak to them instead of going to the Memory Clinic</i></p>	<p>Referral:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A GP or medical practitioner can refer you to the Memory Clinic. • You can also refer yourself. <p>Contact: 03 5454 8500 (select option 1 – Rehabilitation outpatient appointment)</p> <p>Visit online: bendigohealth.org.au/CognitiveDementiaandMemoryServiceClinic</p>	



C. What do I need to do if I receive a dementia diagnosis?

See a GP for advice about future planning, supports and services:







Who can help me?	What do I need to do?	Done
General practitioner (GP)		
A GP can assist with recommended actions, future planning and supports and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for a longer appointment. • Take a family member or friend with you. <p>Ask about the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In relation to receiving a dementia diagnosis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What does the diagnosis mean for my daily life and what actions do I need to take? – What does the diagnosis mean for driving and what actions do I need to take? – Can you support me to review/complete my advance care plan? • In relation to services to help at home: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How can My Aged Care or the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) help? – When should I contact them? – What is the process for accessing services? • In relation to general support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What support is available for myself and my carer and/or family, and how can I access it? 	

Attend to your financial and legal affairs:

Why do I need to do this?	What do I need to do?	Done
Inform your car insurer of your diagnosis		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are required to inform your car insurer of your diagnosis. • Failure to do so may mean your insurance is invalid. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact your car insurer directly. 	








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Why do I need to do this?	What do I need to do?	Done
Contact Centrelink to apply for financial support		
<p>You or your carer may be eligible for financial support such as a carer payment and/or allowance.</p>	<p>Contact: Disability, sickness and carers line: 132 717</p>	
	<p>Visit online: servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/centrelink</p>	
	<p>If you would like support with accessing Centrelink payments, contact the Rights Information & Advocacy Centre (RIAC):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact: 03 5222 5499 • Visit online: riac.org.au • Mail: PO Box 1763, Shepparton, VIC 3630 	
Review or complete your enduring power of attorney		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to plan for the future as soon as possible after receiving a dementia diagnosis, while you have the decision-making capacity to do so. • Making an enduring power of attorney involves appointing someone to make personal and/or financial decisions on your behalf. 	<p>For information, advice and the forms: The Office of the Public Advocate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact: 1300 309 337 • Visit online: publicadvocate.vic.gov.au 	
	<p>For a booklet on advance care planning and making an enduring power of attorney:</p> <p>Visit online: publicadvocate.vic.gov.au/resource/212-take-control-june-2022</p>	
	<p>For assistance completing the forms (at a cost), contact a private solicitor or State Trustees Limited:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact: 1300 138 672 • Visit online: statetrustees.com.au 	
Review or complete your will		
<p>It is important to plan for the future as soon as possible after receiving a dementia diagnosis while you have the decision-making capacity to do so.</p>	<p>For simple circumstances, there are Do It Yourself (DIY) will kits available at post offices, newsagencies and online.</p> <p>To receive assistance (at a cost), contact a private solicitor or State Trustees Limited:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact: 1300 138 672 • Visit online: statetrustees.com.au 	





Seek advice and support on living with dementia:

Who can help me?	What do I need to do?	Done
Dementia Australia		
They can provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A helpline • Resources and information • Dementia advice, education or counselling 	Contact: 1800 100 500 <i>(24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year)</i>	
	Visit in person: 1/10-16 Forest St, Bendigo <i>(restricted hours)</i>	
	Visit online: dementia.org.au	
	dementia.org.au/resources/help-sheets <i>(Help sheets are available in multiple languages)</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family carer education sessions 	For upcoming sessions: dementia.org.au/events	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A post-diagnosis support program to help you manage your diagnosis and live well 	dementia.org.au/support/living-with-dementia/post-diagnostic-support	
Bendigo Health Regional Community Dementia Service		
The community dementia service can provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and clarification following diagnosis • Education on the trajectory of the disease • Advice and referrals to assist in future care planning and service provision <p><i>*If you have a Home Care Package through My Aged Care, speak to your case manager before contacting this service.</i></p>	Contact: 03 5454 8078 <i>(Community Nursing Services)</i>	
	Visit online: bendigohealth.org.au/services/detail/3249	





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Who can help me?	What do I need to do?	Done
Carer Gateway (who will refer you to Bendigo Health Carer Support Services)		
<p>This is a free service for carers, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to information and support • Referral to services • Someone to talk things over with • Access to social and community activities and support 	<p>To register: Register with Carer Gateway and then they will refer you to Bendigo Health Carer Support Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact: 1800 422 737 <i>(listen and respond to the phone instructions leaving your name and phone number. They will call you back).</i> • Visit online: carergateway.gov.au <i>(request a call back)</i> 	
	<p>If you are already registered: Contact Bendigo Health Carer Support Services directly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact: 03 5454 7719 • Visit online: bendigohealth.org.au/CarerSupportService 	



Other options for support:

Who can help me?	What do I need to do?	Done
Heathcote Dementia Alliance (HDA)		
<p>The HDA is a volunteer-run not-for-profit charity that aims to improve the quality of life of people living with dementia and their carers through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy and help navigating the healthcare system • Linkages and connections to service providers and community • Online peer support • Artificial intelligence • Assistive technology • Housing solutions • Return to work pathways for carers 	<p>Contact: 0417 350 911</p>	
	<p>Visit in person: Phone to make an appointment - Futures Hub, rear of Heathcote Health (39 Hospital Street, Heathcote)</p>	
	<p>Visit online: heathcotedementia.org</p>	
Carers Victoria		
<p>Carers Victoria provide access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A telephone Carer Advisory Service • Carer counselling 	<p>Contact: 1800 514 845</p>	
	<p>Visit online: carersvictoria.org.au</p>	
Dementia Alliance International (DAI)		
<p>DAI provides online support groups for people living with dementia.</p>	<p>Visit online: dementiaallianceinternational.org (fill in online contact form)</p>	
	<p>Email: info@infodai.org</p>	
Woodend Lifestyle Carers Group		
<p>This is a volunteer social and educational support group for carers and those they care for living with dementia.</p>	<p>Contact: 03 5420 7132</p>	
	<p>Visit online: woodendlifestylecarersgroup.org.au</p>	