

# Mild Cognitive Impairment or Dementia

People who are told they have mild cognitive impairment (MCI) experience symptoms that are similar to dementia, but aren't as serious. People with MCI have changes in memory or thinking typically poorer than would be expected for someone their age, but the changes don't interfere with daily activities. It should be noted that people with MCI have a higher risk of developing dementia, but not all will.

Dementia is an umbrella term to describe symptoms that are severe enough to interfere with daily activities. The most common cause of dementia in older adults is Alzheimer's disease. Other causes include Lewy body dementia, vascular dementia and Frontotemporal diseases.

A diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or a related disorder doesn't change who you are and it doesn't mean you need to stop doing things you find meaningful. It does mean that over time you might have to do them in a different way or have some assistance. The disease does not affect the entire brain all at once. Many areas of the brain are not affected, or are affected much later.



## Important Messages We All Should Know

Dementia is not a natural part of aging.

Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain and will affect each person differently.

Dementia can affect memory, thinking, communication and doing everyday tasks.

It's possible to live well with dementia.

There is more to a person than the dementia.



# Ways to Work With Mild Cognitive Impairment or Dementia

1

Stop multi-tasking. Focus on doing one thing at a time.

2

Take your time and tell others to allow you the time you need.

3

Use a calendar or smartphone to store your daily schedule and keep notes about names, to-do lists, and other things you want to remember.

4

Set a daily routine that includes things you can and want to do.

5

Stay involved, stay connected, and stay active physically and socially.

6

Consider technology aids, such as:

- Phones or watches that beep or vibrate to remind you to do something at a specific time.
- Home devices that offer reminders like taking medications or locking the door.
- Small electronic locator devices that attach to items and will beep when the item is misplaced.

“I now restructure some tasks so I can still do many things independently, and I am learning to ask for help and partner with others for tasks I cannot do myself. The result is that the world of what I do remains large, but the realm of what I do by myself becomes a bit smaller. It’s not so bad.”

