

Medicines and dementia

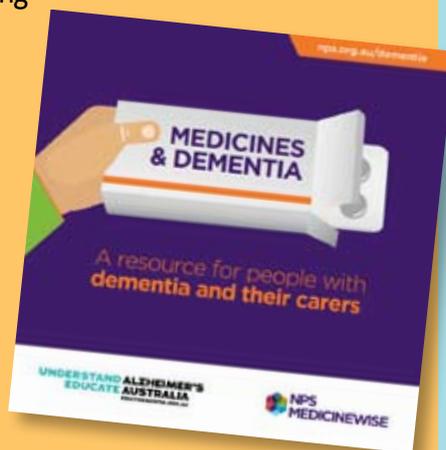
Medicines don't have to be part of your care plan for dementia, and if they are, they don't have to play a large role in your loved-one's life.

NPS MedicineWise have worked with Dementia Australia to offer resources to help you ask questions and talk with people close to you and the health professionals involved in your loved-one's care about how you would like them to be supported. NPS MedicineWise was first established in 1998 as the National Prescribing Service (NPS). They are an independent, not-for-profit, evidence-based, consumer-centred organisation that strives to improve health through safe and wise use of medicines and other health technologies.

The Medicines & Dementia booklet is designed to help:

- plan a conversation about dementia with the people you choose, for example, your family and friends and health professionals involved in your care (eg, GPs, pharmacists, specialists, nurses)
- find out about advanced care planning
- find out what support is available to manage the symptoms of the person you care for
- find information on what treatment options may be best
- record details about symptoms, medicines, values and wishes when it comes to your loved-one's care
- find out about support services available to help you and the person living with dementia.

You can download their information booklet at:
<https://www.nps.org.au/assets/a9c3afd6e83b6c5a-7fc837ad91bf-Medicines-and-dementia-consumer-booklet-Oct-2016.pdf>



Good medicine management for your loved-one

- The person may be taking medicines to treat their dementia as well as other pre-existing conditions or conditions that developed after they were diagnosed with dementia. All medicines have both benefits and side effects and how you respond to some medicines may change when they have dementia. For example, some medicines may make their memory a bit worse or may affect balance and increase the person's risk of falling.
- Like many people, the person with dementia may find it difficult to remember when to take medicines and require your assistance.
- Everybody is entitled to a regular review of their medicines by a pharmacist. These reviews may help simplify the medicines they are taking. They can also identify any side effects, or medicines the person might be taking that are no longer needed.
- Sometimes taking more than one medicine cannot be avoided, but there are ways to help manage them.
- Speak with the person's doctor about whether the number of medicines they are taking can be reduced. ■



The Byron carer

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Byron Shire Respite Service is located at the Brunswick Valley Community Centre, South Beach Rd, Brunswick Heads.

Our incorporated non-government community based organisation is managed by a local committee and covers the shires of Byron, Ballina and Lismore.

NDIS Registered Provider

Respite care is delivered through our Flexible Respite, Day Respite and Social Support projects, with a person centred enablement approach across the respite continuum.

Telephone Janine on: 02) 6685 1629
or Peter on: 02) 6685 1921

Website: www.byronrespite.com.au

Email: caremanager@byronrespite.com.au



Byron Shire Respite Service acknowledge and pay respect to the Arakwal people of the Bundjalung nation, the traditional owners of the land on which we live and care – and pay respect to the Elders past, present and emerging.

Byron Shire Respite Service Inc. is supported by the Australian Government Department of Health. Visit www.health.gov.au

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Depression and dementia

Depression is something that can affect any of us at any time of our lives, however people with dementia may be particularly at risk, especially in the early stages of the disease.

Signs that they may be experiencing depression are:

- loss of interest in activities they once enjoyed
- lack of energy
- sleep problems/poor sleep
- loss of appetite and weight
- feelings of worthlessness and sadness
- unusual emotion, crying, anger or agitation
- increased confusion.

NPS MedicineWise and Dementia Australia believe it is important to talk to the person's doctor if you think the person you care for may be suffering from depression. Their doctor will be able to do an assessment and create a treatment plan. This doesn't have to be medicine-based – you may wish them to try alternatives to medicines such as cognitive behavioural therapy or other therapies discussed below:

Nonpharmacological treatments to improve health and wellbeing

Symptoms of cognitive impairment which may distress the person living with dementia or lead to behaviours that are of concern to the carer, can often be reduced with a variety of non-pharmacological interventions that DO NOT require the use of medication.

Ultimately, you as the family member or carer have a unique insight into the needs, preferences and symptoms of your loved-one living with dementia. Dementia Australia believe it is important that you are included in discussions with medical practitioners about the diagnosis and care management of the person and that your needs are also supported.

Your health professional can obtain advice about the availability of the following activities and training sessions for you and the person you care for.

Modifications to the living environment

include targeting the environment of the person with dementia. The ideal environment for a patient with dementia is one that is non-stressful, constant and familiar. Modifications may include 'de-cluttering' the home and improving lighting to reduce tripping hazards and avoid confusion.

Dementia support groups can help people to develop useful, supportive networks and realise the full extent of potential support services if or when required. There are support and chat groups available online, local carer groups and counselling options available to assist. Call the National Dementia Helpline at 1800 100 500 or visit www.dementia.org.au for more information.

Montessori activities

focus on supporting the independence of people with memory loss through meaningful activities, roles and cues in the environment that assist the person with dementia to understand what task to perform next.

Memory training and using external memory aids

can assist a person in the early stages of dementia to maximise their cognitive functioning and independence. Keeping your mind active is important. You can exercise your mind by doing things that are a bit challenging. It is helpful to keep learning, thinking, and doing a variety of activities.

SANE Online Forums Friends, Family & Carers

The SANE Carers Forums are an online community for people affected by mental illness. They are an opportunity to make connections and share your experience. They're a safe, stigma-free, supportive and anonymous peer support community, moderated 24/7 by mental health professionals.

Contributing to an online forum may support you in your caring role, visit: <https://saneforums.org>

Keeping your mind active can help you to feel good and think more clearly. Some examples include reading, singing, playing games, talking with others, doing crossword puzzles or learning a new skill.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

may be useful to assist with adjustment to the initial diagnosis, forward planning and in treating depression in early stage dementia.

Behavioural Management Therapy

may be useful in targeting behavioural patterns that you find difficult to manage and live with. Such behaviours may include wandering, agitation and repetitive questioning.

Alternative therapies such as light massage and aromatherapy, music and dance therapy, animal assisted therapy, multi-sensory therapy are some of the creative ways to improve the mood of people living with dementia and support you in your caring role.

These interventions may reduce the need for medication, support you as a carer and maintain both your and your loved-one's health and wellbeing. ■

Need support?

- **Carer Gateway** telephone: 1800 422 737 for information about planned & emergency respite & other carer supports. www.carergateway.gov.au
- **Australian Government Department of Health**
For more information about COVID-19 call the Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080 or www.health.gov.au
- **My Aged Care** telephone: 1800 200 422 for information about the Australian Government's aged care system and services. www.myagedcare.gov.au

**If you require emergency respite care, please call the Carer Gateway:
1800 422 737**

- **Telephone Janine at Byron Shire Respite Service to discuss your role as a carer.** telephone: (02) 6685 1629
- **National Dementia Helpline** telephone: 1800 100 500
- **Carers Counselling Service** telephone: (02) 6628 6416
- **Carers NSW** telephone: 1800 242 636
- **Sandra Kimball Counselling** telephone: 0458 175 962
- **National Continence Helpline** telephone: 1800 330 066
- **NSW Elder Abuse Helpline** telephone: 1800 628 221

Aids:

- **Byron Ballina Home Maintenance and Modification Service**
1/65 Centennial Circuit, Byron Bay telephone: (02) 6685 7312
- **Lismore Home Maintenance and Modification Service**
43 Habib Dr, South Lismore telephone: (02) 6622 2323
- **Bright Sky Cards for Continence Aids Payment Scheme (CAPS)** telephone: 1300 886 601

Need Transport?

- **Byron Shire Respite Service** can assist with transport to medical appointments. Telephone Janine or Karen: (02) 6685 1629
- **Byron Shire Limousines** telephone: (02) 6685 5008
Travel for medical appointments free with travel voucher or for Veteran and Widow Gold Card holders
- **Brunswick Limousines** telephone David on: 0412 855 747
- **Tweed Byron Ballina Community Transport** telephone: 1300 875 895
Tweed Byron Ballina Community Transport provide transport to medical appointments, weekly & fortnightly shopping outings & monthly social outings. The service is funded to support older people living at home independently or have a permanent disability or Indigenous Australians aged over 50 years. Phone Kathryn in the Byron office on: 1300 875 895 for transport to medical appointments or Amanda for any shopping bus or social bus enquiries.

Treating cognitive symptoms of dementia
You may decide to have a conversation with your health practitioner about therapies (both medicines and non-drug options) to help slow down cognitive decline and improve memory. Medicines are available that have been shown to slow cognitive decline and improve memory. However, it's important to talk to your doctor, as some medicines are known to worsen cognitive function and it is important for all your medicines to be reviewed before starting medicines that might improve memory function.

Dehydration during hot weather

Dehydration is a common challenge for people with dementia. Memory problems mean someone with dementia can easily forget to drink enough water.

According to Alzheimer's UK, the part of the brain that recognises you're dehydrated and sends a message to let you know you're thirsty doesn't always work properly. Some medications and dementia-related illnesses can also make dehydration worse.

Tips for preventing dehydration

Simple but effective ways of helping to prevent dehydration during hot weather:

- Leave glasses or jugs of water within easy reach. This is especially important for people with limited mobility, who aren't able to get up and make themselves a drink.
- Make drinking easier. Have a clear glass so the person can see what's inside (this may not work so well with water) or a brightly coloured cup to draw attention.
- Make sure the glass is within the line of sight, not too heavy or an odd shape.
- Straws might also be a good idea.
- Make drinking a social occasion. Have a cup of tea or an ice lolly with the person and make sure they're drinking during mealtimes.
- Leave reminders. Make sure someone with dementia remembers to drink regularly by leaving notes out for them or putting up notices around the house. You could also set up a phone reminder or set an alarm clock.
- Provide high water content foods. Supplement water and other drinks with foods that are high in fluids. Some good options include jelly, ice cream, soup and fruit such as melon. ■

How to recognise the symptoms of dehydration

There are some things that may show a person is dehydrated. If you spot any of the following, encourage the person to drink water immediately and seek medical help if needed. If the condition worsens or doesn't improve, go straight to the hospital.

- Increased confusion (compared to what is common for the person)
- Dark and strong-smelling urine
- Dry mouth, lips and eyes
- Headaches or dizziness
- Feeling tired
- Peeing less than 4 times a day.



Byron Shire Respite Service – Day Program Timetable

monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday
10am – 3pm centre-based day respite <i>dementia friendly</i>	10am – 3pm centre-based day respite <i>dementia friendly</i>	10am – 3pm Bus Outings & shopping days Returning soon to Wednesdays: 10am – 3pm centre-based day respite	10am – 3pm centre-based activities for older people	10am – 3pm centre-based day respite <i>dementia friendly</i>



Lunch, morning and afternoon tea is provided.
The cost for the day including transport is \$22.00 (Fees subject to change).

For more information, please contact centre on 02) 6685 1921 Email: caremanager@byronrespite.com.au



Ageism is not benign or harmless. It is a big problem because it impacts on our confidence, quality of life, job prospects, health, and control over life decisions.

What is ageism?

Ageism can be defined as prejudice expressed toward a person because of their age. It includes stereotyping, discrimination and mistreatment. While ageism can affect anyone of any age, the **EveryAGE Counts campaign** is focusing on addressing ageism relating to older people. In this context, ageism comes from negative attitudes and beliefs about what it means to be an older person. It is pervasive but often hidden. It can distort our attitudes to older people and ageing and have profound negative impacts on our personal experience of growing older.

The EveryAGE Counts Campaign

The EveryAGE Counts is an advocacy campaign aimed at tackling ageism. It's an ambitious campaign spearheading a social movement with a challenging goal: to shift social norms (those unwritten rules of common thinking and behaviour) and positively influence the way Australia thinks about ageing and older people.

To learn more visit: <https://www.everyagecounts.org.au>

To read the original transcript of this article on dehydration, visit: <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk>