



Myth or Fact?

For information about how you can make your community a better place to live for people with dementia, their families and carers, visit www.dementiafriendlysurrey.org.uk

To find out more about dementia call the National Dementia Helpline on **0300 222 11 22** or visit the Alzheimer's Society's website on www.alzheimers.org.uk

This is part of the wider Ageing Well programme of work, supporting residents to live and age well in Surrey.

For more information visit www.surreycc.gov.uk/ageingwell



Dementia is something that affects many of us, but how much do we really know about it?

Look inside to read some common statements about dementia, and find out if they are myth or fact.

Myth or **Fact?**

Alzheimer's disease is a type of dementia

Fact!

Dementia is the term used for a group of symptoms including loss of memory, mood changes and confusion caused by diseases of the brain. There are many different types of dementia. Alzheimer's disease is the most common, followed by vascular dementia.

As we get older, it's normal for memory loss to be a problem and interfere with everyday life

Myth!

Occasional memory loss may not be a cause for concern. However, if memory loss starts to be a problem and interferes with our ability to do things then we shouldn't ignore them. Forgetting important dates or events, or asking for the same information over and over are signs that we should seek advice.

Once you have a dementia diagnosis there's little that can be done to help you

Myth!

While dementia can't be cured, an early diagnosis can mean that the right support and treatments are put in place and the person with dementia and their family can make plans for the future.



Myth or **Fact?**

My parents had dementia so I am bound to get it

Myth!

In most cases this is not true but it depends on the particular type of dementia. For most forms of dementia, especially those occurring in older age, having a family member with dementia only slightly increases your chances of developing it than if there was no family history.

We can reduce our risk of dementia by healthy eating, exercising and not smoking

Fact!

A healthy and balanced diet, plus regular exercise, will reduce the likelihood of developing high blood pressure or heart disease, both of which put a person at greater risk of developing dementia. You are also at a much lower risk of dementia if you don't smoke.

A full and active life is simply not possible if we are diagnosed with dementia

Myth!

Many people with dementia continue to work, socialise, take part in hobbies and enjoy loving relationships. As the dementia progresses they may need more help doing everyday things but with the right support they can continue to live a full and active life for as long as possible.

Over a third of people living with dementia feel lonely

Fact!

This finding is from a survey conducted by the Alzheimer's Society (2013). Having dementia can mean that people avoid you just when you need your family and friends most. If someone you know has dementia then the best thing you can do is stay in touch and help them to continue living a full and active life.

How can you help make a **difference**?



- **“Can I help you?”** and a friendly smile go a long way to put people at ease.
- **Be patient** – give people time.
- **Be clear** – communicate clearly, use gestures and props to help, find a quiet place to talk.
- **Don’t make assumptions about what someone may want or need** – be guided by the individual.
- **Remember that the little things can mean a lot.** Popping in for a cup of tea, offering to cut the grass or running an errand could make a big difference.
- **Talk about dementia to friends and colleagues to help reduce the stigma.**
- **Remember the carer, they may need support too.**