About Dementias

Dementia is defined by the National Institute of Aging as a broad term referring to a decline in cognitive function to the extent that it interferes with daily life and activities. About 5 to 8 percent of all people over the age of 65 have some form of dementia and that percentage doubles every 5 years above age 65. It is estimated that about half of people age 85 and older suffer from dementia.

Signs of dementia or cognitive impairment may include:
- Memory loss
- Impaired judgment
- Difficulties with abstract thinking
- Faulty reasoning
- Inappropriate behavior
- Loss of communication skills
- Disorientation to time and place
- Gait, motor, & balance problems
- Neglect of personal care & safety
- Hallucination, paranoia, agitation

What to do if you have symptoms of dementia:
- Report your symptoms to your doctor as soon as possible and schedule regular follow up visits.
- Keep a list of your symptoms and concerns and ask family members for their observations. Write down specific information about the frequency, nature, and setting of your memory, cognitive, or behavior concerns.
- Take charge by learning as much about dementia as you can. Knowing what to expect will help you plan, adjust, and live life as fully as possible.

Sources for information:
http://www.caring.com/articles/types-of-dementia
http://alzheimers.about.com/od/typesofdementia/Types_of_Dementia.htm
www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/dementia.html
www.mayoclinic.com/health/dementia/DS01131

Forms of Dementia:
Alzheimer’s disease represents about 60 to 70 percent of all dementia cases; however, there are other less known forms of Dementia. In some cases, progressive forms of dementia can be treated and reversed if caught early.
enough. This list will help you identify them and allow you to take control if you have symptoms or see potential symptoms in loved ones.

**Vascular Dementia:**
It is caused by poor blood flow to the brain, depriving the brain cells of nutrients needed to function normally. It can result from stroke or hypertension.

**Lewy Body Dementia:**
It is caused by abnormal protein deposits, called Lewy bodies, in the nerve cells of the brain stem. It disrupts normal functioning and causes hallucinations, tremors, and behavioral problems.

**Creutzfeldt-Jacob Dementia:**
It is also known as Mad Cow disease. It is caused by a virus that interferes with the brain’s ability to function and results in dementia over several months, blurred vision, uncontrolled movement and hallucinations.

**Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus:**
This occurs when there is an abnormal amount of cerebrospinal fluid in the brain’s cavities. It results in not only dementia, but problems with walking and balance, and impaired bladder control.

**Wernicke-Korsakoff Syndrome:**
It is caused by a deficiency of thiamine, also known as vitamin B1 and is most often present in alcoholics. It can also become present in those that are malnourished, have cancer, high thyroid levels, or on long term dialysis.

**Pick’s Disease:**
It is also known as Frontotemporal Dementia. It causes damage to brain cells in the frontal and temporal lobes. It normally occurs in individuals ages 50 to 60. It presents itself through a drastic change in personality, a lack of empathy or emotion, and a deterioration of social skills. These symptoms are usually present before dementia is formed in the individual.

**Dementia due to other diseases:**
There are diseases, such as Parkinson’s disease and Huntington’s disease that can eventually result in dementia. Dementia can also result from head traumas, like a single major head injury or repeated injuries from sports. HIV/AIDS can also cause dementia because of the destruction of tissues in the brain.

Dementia can also result from a combination of two or more of these issues: high cholesterol, vitamin D and B deficiency, depression, low thyroid function, omega-3 fat deficiency, heavy metal intoxication, and genes that predisposes you to nutritional or detoxification problems.