



Alzheimer's
QUEENSLAND



Dementia Matters

A Publication of Alzheimer's Queensland

Alzheimer's Queensland is Queensland's largest not-for-profit community whose primary aim is to maintain the quality of life of people with dementia and their caregivers. We support the desire of most people to remain living in their own home as long as possible and assist families and caregivers to facilitate this.

We aim to do this by offering the following State-wide Information, Education and Support Services

- *24 hour 7 days per week professionally staffed Advice Line
- *Community education Library resources
- *Interactive website
- *Professional education
- *Family carer education
- * Support groups – face to face and telephone
- * Individualized support
- * Fact sheets and specific information requests

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Garden City Multi Service Centre

The Garden City Multi Service Centre operates from two cottage-style homes located in Mt Gravatt. It offers secure, homely cottage-based respite, 24 hours a day and 7 days a week

The Gold Coast Multi Service Centre is suitable for both people living with Dementia or the frail aged, as well those over 65 seeking opportunities for social and community engagement.

Offering both centre-based and in-home respite care, giving carers and their families a well-earned break to recharge and attend to daily life; safe in the knowledge that their loved one is being cared for by carers trained specifically in Dementia fundamentals, behaviours and response.

The Ipswich Multi Service Centre offers the following services;

- Centre-based respite & social support – offering social interaction for clients whilst participating in meaningful activities and outings.
- Cottage Overnight respite – Offering families overnight respite with the knowledge their loved one is safe and being cared for.
- In-Home respite – providing a companion in the comfort of the client’s own home, assistance with personal hygiene, meal preparation or medication assistance.
- Allied Health – offering services such as Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Podiatry and speech pathology.

If you would like to find out more or arrange a tour please contact the Multi Service Centre on 07 3349 0875

Garden City Multi Service Centre
50 Khandalla Street
Upper Mt Gravatt QLD 4122
T: 07 3349 0875
E: intaketeam@alzqld.org.au





Clinical Corner

Alzheimer's Disease: Risk Factors, Diagnosis & Disease Progression

Risk Factors

The exact cause of Alzheimer's disease is unknown. There are however, 5 known risk factors recognised in the development of Alzheimer's disease (AD). These known risk factors are as followed:

- **Age:** The older the person is, the greater the risk of developing the disease. Approximately 1 in 20 people over the age of 65 years. The likelihood of developing Alzheimer's doubles about every five years after age 65. After age 85, the risk reaches nearly 50 percent.
- **Gender:** Alzheimer's disease appears to affect more women than men.
- **Family History:** The risk of developing the disease is greater if a primary relative (parent, grand parent or sibling) develop AD prior to the age of 65 years.
- **Head Injury:** A severe head injury or repeated blows to the head may increase the risk of developing dementia but not necessarily Alzheimer's disease.
- **Down Syndrome:** For unknown reasons, people with Down Syndrome are prone to developing Alzheimer's disease in their thirties or forties.

How is it diagnosed?

Diagnosis of AD is a complicated process and there is no definitive test for the disease. Accurate diagnosis can only be made with an autopsy.

The first step is to see your doctor for a thorough medical examination. The doctors will diagnose AD by a process of elimination. There are a number of other conditions and illnesses that mimic the symptoms of AD, many of which are treatable.

Some of these illnesses can include depression, liver or kidney disease, some infections, vitamin deficiencies and the use of particular medication. Numerous tests may be required to rule out these and other causes.

Once diagnosis is made, it is advisable to contact Alzheimer's Queensland for information and to assist in the implementation of appropriate management plans.



Progression of Alzheimer's disease

Alzheimer's disease occurs when there is a destruction of brain cells in small isolated areas of the brain. The appearance of the diseased cells is referred to as 'plaques' and 'tangles.' Each area of the brain controls different functions, so depending on where the disease first strikes, will determine the initial symptoms seen. Most commonly the first area of the brain affected is the memory centre. This is why short- term memory loss is often the first sign experienced by people with Alzheimer's disease.

Over the time, the disease spreads to affect other functions such as the ability to use and understand language; or to perform familiar tasks such as dressing. At the end stage of the disease it is not uncommon for the person to no longer be able to recognise close family members (e.g. spouse or children). The person with AD becomes dependent on a carer to assist with basic daily activities such as eating and personal hygiene.

As the disease causes progressive deterioration of the brain, the world becomes an increasingly confusing and frightening place for the person with Alzheimer's disease. It is no wonder that these people often exhibit anger and aggression. They may realise that something amiss, but not know what is wrong or what to do about it.

Living with AD is characterised by loss and that is a tragedy, for both the person with the disease, their carer and their family.

Frequently asked questions

Is there a cure for Alzheimer's disease?

At present, there is no cure for Alzheimer's disease. There are neither drugs nor therapies to halt the progression or reverse damage that has already occurred. There are some drugs that can be trialled to help slow the progression and help manage the person's behavioural changes that are associated with the disease.

How long does a person with Alzheimer's disease live?

This is impossible to predict. The symptoms, severity and rate of progression of the disease varies from person to person. On average a person with Alzheimer's disease will live up to 10 years from when symptoms first occur. However, people can live up to 20 years or more.

Do all 'old' people get Alzheimer's disease?

The answer is a definite NO. Alzheimer's disease is not a normal part of aging. The majority of people will never get Alzheimer's disease. About 1 in 20 people over the age of 65 may be affected, and the incidence increases to about 25- 30% of people over the age of 80.

**Help and assistance is available. For further information
please contact Alzheimer's Queensland Advice Line on
1800 639 331**

Dementia and Travelling Tips

Dementia and Travelling Tips

Travel and holidays are often part of retirement or recreational plans. However, for people living with dementia and their carers, travel and holidays may require greater planning as the disease progresses. The person living with dementia may or may not want to travel and may have little insight into the potential problems. Carers may be anxious and unsure how the person living with dementia will respond to changes to environment and routine during the holiday. With early planning, strategies can be put in place to reduce the risk of problems occurring and increase the likelihood of travelling having positive outcomes for both the carer and the person living with dementia. Consideration should be given to the person's current capacity for independence, their safety (e.g. physical, psychological, financial), preferences, routines and options as change can contribute to anxiety, insecurity or confusion.

Steps that you may take to make travel and holidays pleasant experiences are:

- Plan early to identify potential problems
- Will you enjoy this form of travel if the person with dementia cannot be left alone Take a trial overnight or short trip
- If you book flights or a cruise 6 months ahead, can you cancel if the person with dementia becomes less able to participate in the holiday
- Research travel insurance. Check re pre-existing conditions e.g. dementia and premiums
- Have an emergency and contingency plan in place including a plan to cover changes to your own health as the primary carer. (What will I do if.....? Who would I contact if.....? What would it cost to fly/travel home early.....?)
- Seek specialist or GP advice prior to travel. Take a medical history summary including a current medication list
- Take sufficient medication for the time frame. Monitor medication compliance
- Avoid travel during peak periods or when the person is fatigued or likely to be more confused
- Solo travel may be undertaken under controlled situations e.g. flying from one airport to another may be undertaken when there is a familiar support person to guide at both ends. When the airline is informed escorts on and off the plane may be arranged including support through customs if inspections were requested and the person may not fully understand.
- At airport check points, carers may follow after the person with dementia in case the person is taken aside for further checks and they become confused. The medical letter with the diagnosis could be shown.
- Choose the shortest and fastest mode of transportation
- If travelling by plane or train limit layovers or train changes, and if stopping allow for longer stopovers
- If traveling in plane or train request is suitable e.g. noise, lighting, toilet and bathroom access and aids for transfers if needed With an unfamiliar environment, ensure you have securely locked the door and consider using a portable door exit alarm

Consider a light on at night to allow for visibility and reduce disorientation Be prepared to ask for assistance seating near toilets to enable easy access

- Take familiar activity to distract or to occupy time e.g. ear phones and music may distract from surrounding noise or changed environment
- Maintain daily routines similar to home to reduce the chance of confusion e.g. eating (time and type of foods), sleeping or rest routines
- Consider use of identification bracelets
- Carry a recent photograph of the person with you
- Consider GPS tracking devices to assist in locating or monitoring the whereabouts of the individual. Check with the provider or manufacturer that the tracking device works overseas
- Take a list of important contacts – medical doctor and family members
- Pack familiar personal belongings. Avoid excessive hand luggage e.g. keep on hand only personal items, change of clothing and medication needed
- Be prepared to carry the important items such as money, passport etc. yourself
- Leave a copy of important documents with someone else at home and carry a copy with yourself as well
- If staying with friends/family or in a hotel, ensure you have communicated that there can be special needs and check that the people and environment

Some signs that indicate travel may be difficult or unwise include:

- Wanting to go home when out on short visits
- Disorientation or agitation in familiar environment
- Episodic or persistent behaviours such as aggression, paranoia, hallucinations, wandering in familiar environments
- Difficult to reassure, redirect or distract
- Episodes of not recognising carers, family • Difficulty with managing incontinence
- Signs of being overwhelmed such as teary and anxious in noisy or unfamiliar environments Unstable medical conditions
- Frequent falls

For any questions or concerns you have in relation to dementia and its management, or for specific information on services available in your area and how to access them, please contact Alzheimer's Queensland on
1800 639 331

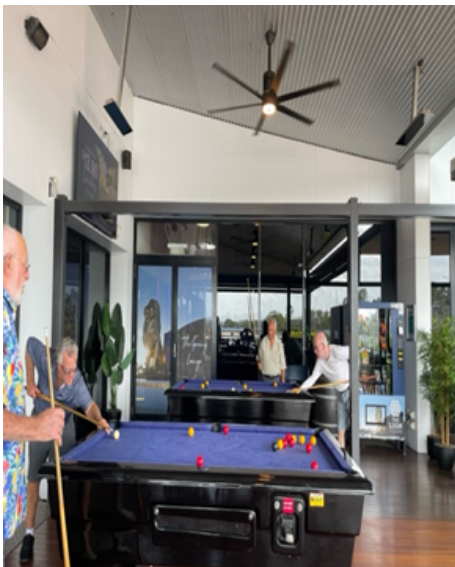
Out & About

Our Ipswich Multi Service Centre clients have been out and about in the community enjoying some great outings and activities.



Clients from the Ipswich Multi Service Centre enjoying a day by the water in Wynnum.

A group of clients enjoyed a trip to Orminston Heritage House, followed by a beautiful Devonshire Tea for morning tea.



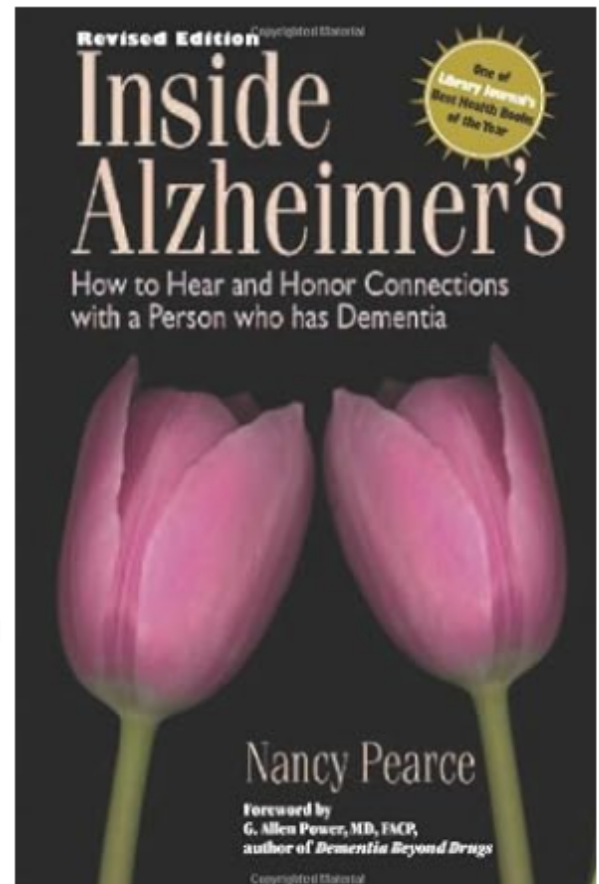
Clients enjoying a game of snooker at the Richlands Lions Club

Recommended Reading

Inside Alzheimer's: How to hear and honor connections with a person who has Dementia

We have long underestimated the person who has dementia. Each one's ability to reach out in familiar ways certainly diminishes yet he or she is always able to experience the deep benefits that come from being in vital relationship with others. Inside Alzheimer's tells how dozens of persons with dementia and their sharing of wisdom, humor and life's teachings led Ms. Pearce to the six basic principles of connection--how one person connects with another: Intend a connection, Free yourself of judgment, Love, Open to receive love, Silence and Thankfulness. Internalizing these principles has empowered hundreds of family, friends, and professionals to create moments of connection with persons, regardless of how advanced the dementia, and to co-create a more supportive community of care.

Inside Alzheimers was revised to address the dramatic need to simultaneously provide a compassionate community of care for the one person who does not have any time or energy left to even pick up a book the frequently isolated and overwhelmed 24/7 caregiver. This revised edition includes two 7-page, ready-reference articles that give information collected from hundreds of once-overwhelmed 24/7 care persons who wanted to give concrete, helpful messages to overwhelmed (or soon-to-be) 24/7 care persons and to persons in the community who are concerned about them. It also includes a foreword written by renowned physician Dr. Allen Power (author of Dementia Beyond Drugs), expanded resources including new sections such as Excellent Free Resources and Building a Supportive Community of Care, Cut and Post Cards, and many new exercises to enhance reader understanding and energize the spirit.



"...Inside Alzheimer's is a practical, conversational guide for those new to the disease, as well as advice and techniques for seasoned professionals... This book helps families and caregivers better understand individuals with Alzheimer's through love, acceptance and communication."

ForeWord Magazine

PIN ON YOUR NOTICE BOARD ALZHEIMER'S QUEENSLAND SERVICES AND CONTACTS WWW.ALZHEIMERSONLINE.ORG

Dementia Advice Line

1800 639 331

Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Free Call from landline and public phones
or email: helpline@alzheimeronline.org

For information and emotional support for
people living with Dementia, families,
friends and staff.

The Dementia Advice Line has a database
of services to provide information and
referrals. Call for free information e.g. fact
sheets or brochures to be mailed out.

AQ Rehab

In home physiotherapy
Occupational Therapy
Speech Therapy
1800 180 023

Care Services

Our Multi Service Centres are located in
Brisbane North, Brisbane South, South
Coast, Ipswich and Toowoomba and offer
the following;

- Personal Care and domestic assistance
- Social support and transport
- Allied health assessments
- Respite – Centre based; day,
overnight and emergency
- NDIS support
- Home garden maintenance

Residential Aged Care located at;

- Garden City Aged Care Services
- Rosalie Nursing Care Centre
- Windsor Aged Care Services

Home Care Packages at;
Brisbane South, Brisbane North, Logan
River, West Morton, Darling Downs and
South Coast.

Carer Support Groups

Alzheimer's Queensland Carer Support Groups provide information and support to those
caring for a friend or family member with Dementia.

Please phone 1800 639 331 for more information or to be placed on the mailing list.

Fortnightly 09:30am – 11:30am

Brisbane North – 07 3857 2191 Brisbane South – 07 3349 0875

South Coast – 07 5613 1844 Ipswich – 07 3812 2253

Monthly 09:30am – 11:30am

Toowoomba – 07 4635 2966