

WHAT IS EARLY ONSET DEMENTIA?

Dementia describes symptoms that affect memory, thinking, and social abilities so much so that a person cannot perform daily functions

Dementia may be caused by Alzheimer's disease or another disease or condition that damages or kills nerve cells and their connections in the brain

"Early onset dementia" first occurs in a person under 65; it can begin when people are in their 30s, 40s, or 50s

Early onset dementia poses a unique problem: 1) Because it's unexpected 2) Because most programs and services are designed for older people



Signs of early onset dementia

- Early diagnosis and treatment can slow the progression of the disease
- However, getting a diagnosis is challenging, as healthcare providers often don't look for the disease in younger patients
- The experts at the Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center say to look out for these signs and symptoms:

COGNITIVE CHANGES

- *Memory loss, forgetting important information*
- *Difficulty with communicating or finding words*
- *Difficulty with visual and spatial abilities*
- *Difficulty reasoning or problem-solving*
- *Difficulty handling complex tasks*
- *Difficulty with planning and organizing*
- *Difficulty with coordination and motor functions*
- *Confusion and disorientation*

PSYCHOLOGICAL CHANGES

- *Personality changes, mood swings*
- *Depression*
- *Anxiety*
- *Inappropriate behavior*
- *Paranoia*
- *Agitation*
- *Hallucinations*



How to prevent and treat early onset dementia

- While there's no sure way to prevent dementia, experts say the following might help:
 - *Keep your mind and body active*
 - *Quit smoking*
 - *Get enough vitamins (particularly vitamin D)*
 - *Manage cardiovascular risk factors like high blood pressure and cholesterol*
 - *Maintain a healthy diet and get quality sleep*
- Most types of dementia can't be cured, but symptoms can sometimes be managed through medication and therapies