



The
**Dementia
Society**
Ottawa and Renfrew County

DEMENTIA WITH LEWY BODIES



If you or someone you know received a diagnosis of dementia, you may be wondering:

WHAT IS DEMENTIA WITH LEWY BODIES?

Dementia is an umbrella term for a group of brain conditions. These conditions cause changes in the brain which lead to a wide range of symptoms. This affects a person's ability to do daily activities. Dementia is progressive, which means symptoms get worse and change over time.

Dementia with Lewy bodies is a type of dementia. Lewy bodies are protein deposits in the brain. Lewy bodies disrupt connections between brain cells. You may hear the term "Lewy Body Dementia". This can refer to Dementia with Lewy bodies or Parkinson's disease dementia. These two conditions are very similar.

- To read more about the types of dementia: [Click Here](#)
- To learn more about the science of dementia: [Click Here](#)

IS IT GENETIC?

Very few cases have a specific genetic link.

Many factors make it more likely for someone to develop dementia. Some common risk factors include smoking, obesity, and lack of exercise. Lifestyle changes can help reduce the risk. To learn about prevention, read the Living Well for Brain Health fact sheet available [Here](#).

To learn about reducing the risk of dementia: [Click Here](#)

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Dementia with Lewy bodies affects mental abilities. Changes in a person's alertness and attention happen in the early stages. Later, the person may develop problems with movement. The exact symptoms are different for each individual.

Other symptoms can include:

- **Hallucinations**
 - A hallucination is seeing or hearing something that is not there.
- **Delusions**
 - A delusion is when a person believes something that is not true.
 - For example, a person could falsely believe that the neighbours are stealing from them.
- **Sleep disturbances**
 - Sleep disturbances may start years before the diagnosis.
 - A person may act out their dreams. They might punch, kick, or scream. This can be harmful for bed partners.
- **Problems with movement**
 - The person may develop rigid and slow movements, or tremors.
 - Shuffling when walking is common. This makes the person more prone to falls.

When someone shows symptoms of Dementia, connect with them and support them. Try not to correct or blame them. To learn more about symptoms, [Click Here](#)

HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

The doctor must first rule out other possible causes of symptoms. The doctor might also refer the person to a specialist for tests. There is no single test to detect Dementia with Lewy bodies. Instead, experts use a combination of tests. This includes tests of mental abilities and brain scans. Tests of mental abilities can show symptoms and their severity. Brain scans can show the location of brain damage.

It is important to diagnose the right type of dementia. Some medications may help one type but have harmful effects for another.

Getting a diagnosis can take time. Details from close friends or family members may help the experts arrive at a diagnosis. It is best to express concerns to a doctor early to track changes in symptoms.

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- Reach out to the Dementia Society - **No One Should Face Dementia Alone™** <https://dementiahelp.ca/>
- Sign up for the Dementia Basics workshop to learn more: <https://dementiahelp.ca/programs-services/ottawa-programs/>
- Connect with a Dementia Care Coach: <https://dementiahelp.ca/programs-services/dementia-care-coach/>
- For information on Parkinson's disease dementia: <https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/what-is-dementia/types-of-dementia/parkinson-s-disease-dementia>

Ottawa: 613-523-4004 **Renfrew-County:** 1-888-411-2067 | info@dsorc.org | DementiaHelp.ca

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