



## Just Diagnosed with Dementia?

### A Step-by-Step Guide for Families

A new dementia diagnosis can feel overwhelming but taking the right steps early on can make a big difference. This guide will walk you through what to do next to support your loved one and your family.

Early action builds a strong foundation for the road ahead. You don't have to do it all at once but starting now can make the journey smoother, safer, and more supportive for everyone involved.



#### Step 1: Learn About the Diagnosis

- Identify the type of dementia (e.g., Alzheimer's, Lewy Body, Vascular).
- Ask the doctor about the expected progression and available treatments.
- Read reputable resources (e.g., Alzheimer's Association) to understand symptoms and care needs.

#### Step 2: Build Your Care Team

- Schedule follow-up appointments with neurologists, primary care, or geriatricians.
- Consider adding a geriatric care manager to help coordinate care.
- Talk to a home care agency early—even if you don't need care yet — so you're prepared.

#### Step 3: Get Legal & Financial Affairs in Order

- Complete or update:
  - Power of Attorney (POA) for healthcare and finances
  - Advance Healthcare Directive
  - Will or Trust documents
- Consult an elder law attorney for guidance on asset protection and long-term planning.

#### Step 4: Make the Home Safer

- Remove tripping hazards, improve lighting, and install grab bars.
- Use medication organizers and label items clearly.
- Consider monitoring technology or emergency response systems.

#### Step 5: Seek Support—for You and Your Loved One

- Join a caregiver support group.
- Involve other family members early to share responsibilities.
- Watch for signs of caregiver stress—ask for help when needed.



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