

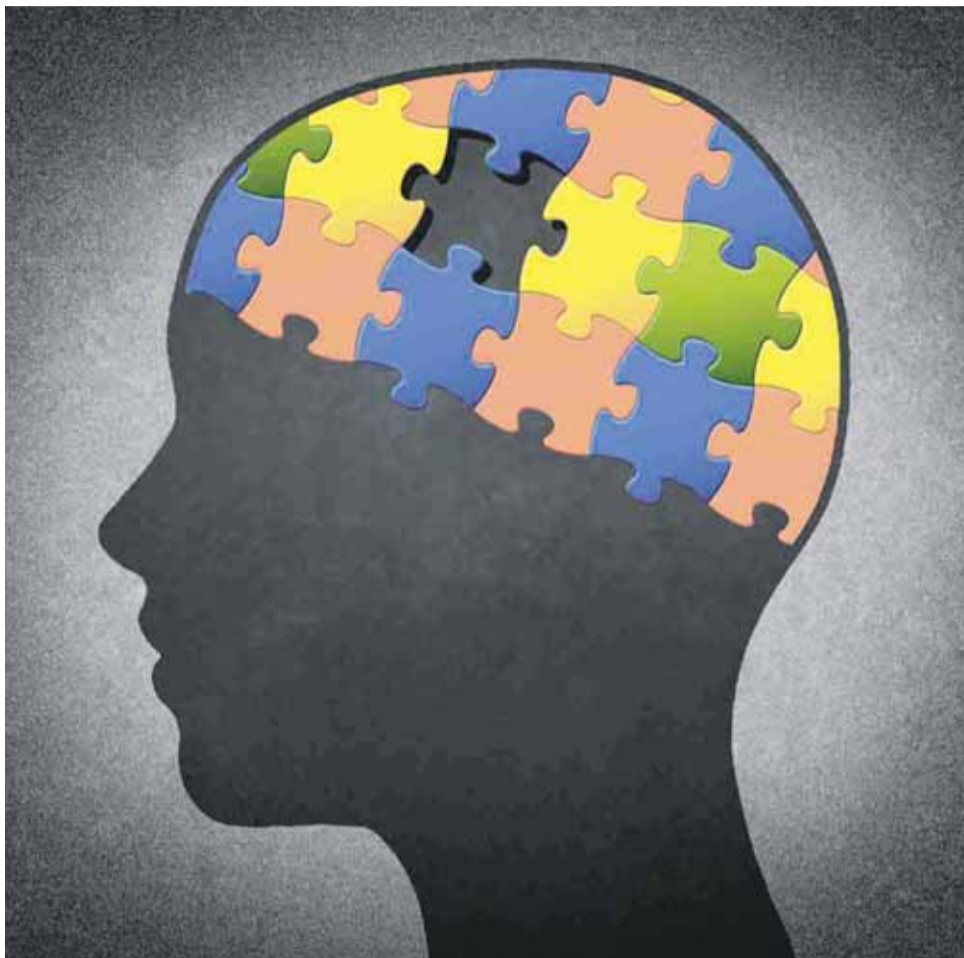
DEMENTIA**THE TRUTH ABOUT AGEING AND DEMENTIA**

OUR body undergoes many changes with age. As adults age, some may experience normal age-related changes of memory and thought. Dementia, or severe memory loss that interferes with daily life, is not part of the normal ageing process. Be informed on what is and what isn't a healthy ageing process.

What is normal ageing?

Signs of ageing can begin as young as age 30. The process of ageing may result in many alterations including:

- **Heart and blood vessels:** Stiffening of arteries and blood vessels makes the heart work harder. Physical activities such as walking for long distances or walking uphill may become more difficult.
- **Bones:** Bones shrink and reduce in density, making them more fragile and likely to break. Joint cartilage may start wearing away, which can cause some pain or stiffness.
- **Muscles:** Muscles lose strength, flexibility, and endurance over time. Muscle mass decreases 3-5% every 10 years after the age of 30 and this percentage increases after the age of 60.
- **Bladder and bowel:** The ability of the bladder to stretch and to resume its normal shape may be reduced. This may cause the bladder to hold less urine than before, resulting



in more frequent trips to the bathroom. Bowel changes can lead to constipation.

- **Skin:** Skin also loses elasticity and, in some people, results in wrinkles. Skin also becomes thinner and more delicate, bruising easily.
- **Vision:** Vision alterations can include far-sightedness, as a result of hardening of the lens. Cataracts may develop, which is a clouding of the eye lens affecting vision. This can cause blurred vision and ultimately blindness if not treated.
- **Mental health:** Ageing is a process which can

result in many changes, and it may take a little getting used to. Some people may become depressed, although others may have a sense of fulfilment and feel happy with their lives.

- **Memory and thinking (cognition):** Normal ageing may mean a slower processing speed and more difficulty with multitasking, but routine memory, skills, and knowledge are stable and may even improve with age. It's normal to occasionally forget recent events such as where the keys were last placed or the name of the person you just met.

What is NOT normal ageing?

Dementia is a term applied to a set of cognitive declining symptoms, including disruptions of language, memory, attention, recognition, problem solving, and decision-making that interferes with daily activities. Other signs of dementia include:

- Not being able to complete tasks independently
- Difficulty in naming items or close family members
- Forgetting items and their function
- Repeating questions
- Taking much longer to complete normal tasks

- Misplacing items frequently
- Being unable to retrace steps and getting lost

Conditions that can mimic dementia

Certain medical conditions and vitamin deficiencies, such as hypothyroidism, infections, and Vitamin B12 deficiency, can mimic symptoms of dementia. Additionally, some prescription and over-the-counter medications can also cause dementia-like symptoms. If you are experiencing these symptoms, it is important to talk to your healthcare provider to find out if there are any underlying causes for these symptoms.

Risk reduction and eight ways to improve brain health

There is growing scientific evidence that healthy behaviour, which has been shown to prevent cancer, diabetes, and heart disease, may also reduce the risk of memory loss.

Here are eight ways that may reduce your risk:

- **Quit smoking.** Stop smoking now and improve your brain health, thereby reducing your risk of heart disease, cancer, lung disease, and other smoking-related illnesses.
- **Maintain a healthy blood pressure level.**
- **Control cholesterol levels** with exercise and, if needed, cholesterol medication.

- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Healthy weight isn't about short-term dietary changes. Instead, it's about a lifestyle that includes healthy eating and regular physical activity.
- **Get enough sleep.**
- **Keep occupied.** There are many ways for older adults to be involved in their community.
- **Control blood sugar levels.**
- **If you drink alcohol,** do so in moderation – up to one drink per day for women and up to two drinks per day for men.

In addition, reduce hazards in your environment that could lead to falls or head injury.

Be prepared to discuss memory-related problems

More than half of the people who experience memory loss have not talked to their healthcare provider, but you do not have to be one of them. If you experience any alteration of memory or increased confusion, or if you just need to discuss the situation, feel comfortable with discussing your symptoms with your medical provider. You can also discuss healthcare planning, management of chronic conditions, and possible future healthcare needs with your doctor.

Article submitted by HPA Health Group



BRITISH & PORTUGUESE DENTAL PRACTITIONERS

Dr. John McKean, BDS **Dr. Joana Cesário, DDS**

SPECIALISING IN THE CARE OF NERVOUS AND FRIGHTENED PATIENTS

- All costs agreed prior to treatment using the most cost effective solutions;
- Rapid denture repairs and removable orthodontics;
- Cosmetic facial contouring practitioner using Botulinum and facial fillers

Tel.: 289 543 545 (24h)

Rua Alexandre Herculano, Conjunto Ria Formosa, nº Q, R/C, 8200-271 ALBUFEIRA (Behind the yellow shop VESPA)
 www.clinicapacifico.com - Email: clinica.pacifico.albufeira@gmail.com

OPHTHALMOLOGY

DR. MED.

ALEN SULZBACHER

THE COMPLETE SPECTRUM OF OPTHALMOLOGY

GLASSES PRESCRIPTION



VALE DO LOBO 289 353 433 - ALBUFEIRA 289 543 545
CASCAIS 218 025 501