

UNDERSTANDING DEMENTIA





SESSION OVERVIEW

- How a healthy brain works
- An overview of dementia
- Why behaviour changes
- Myths about dementia
- What to do if concerned
- Our Services



FACTS AND FIGURES

- There are currently more than **353,800** Australians living with dementia – approx. **97,000** Victorians
- Each week more than **1,800** new cases are diagnosed
- By 2050, if no medical breakthrough, **900,000** people living with dementia
- There are approximately **25,100** people living with Younger Onset Dementia

HOW OUR BRAIN WORKS

Frontal Lobes

- 1) Planning, organising, decision making
- 2) Starting and stopping actions
- 3) Regulation of social behaviour
- 4) Working memory
- 5) Speech generation
- 6) Insight

Parietal Lobes

- 1) Sensory processing
- 2) Attention
- 3) Reading/Writing
- 4) Calculation
- 5) Spatial orientation

Limbic Region

- 1) Forming and processing emotions
- 2) Forming and organising memories

Occipital Lobes

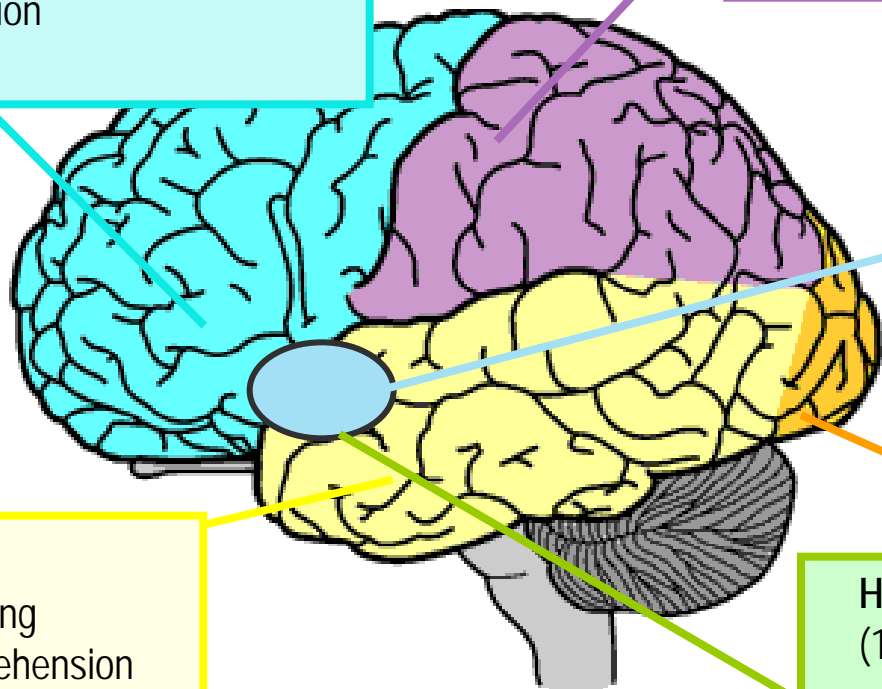
- 1) Visual processing

Temporal Lobes

- 1) Auditory processing
- 2) Language comprehension

Hippocampus

- (1) Memories are stored all over the brain, but the process is coordinated in the hippocampus





So, what is dementia?



DEMENTIA IS...

The name given to the set of symptoms that are caused by brain disease. Dementia is a **disease process** that affects the way the brain is able to work.

There are many causes and forms of dementia, however, the most common cause is **Alzheimer's disease.**

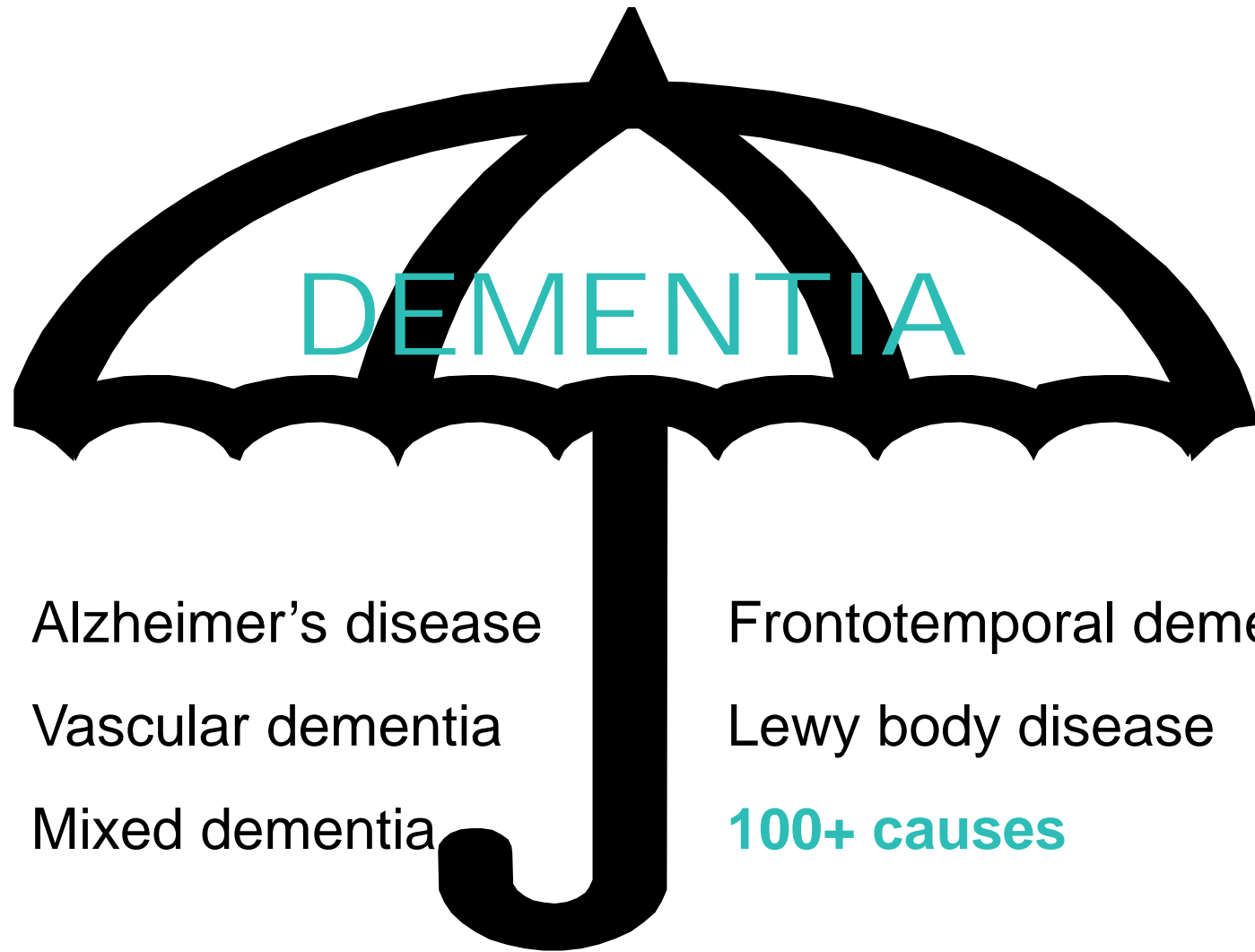


WHAT IS DEMENTIA?

SYMPTOMS can include changes to the way the person:

- thinks
- remembers
- behaves
- reacts
- speaks & counts
- finds their way around





Alzheimer's disease

Vascular dementia

Mixed dementia

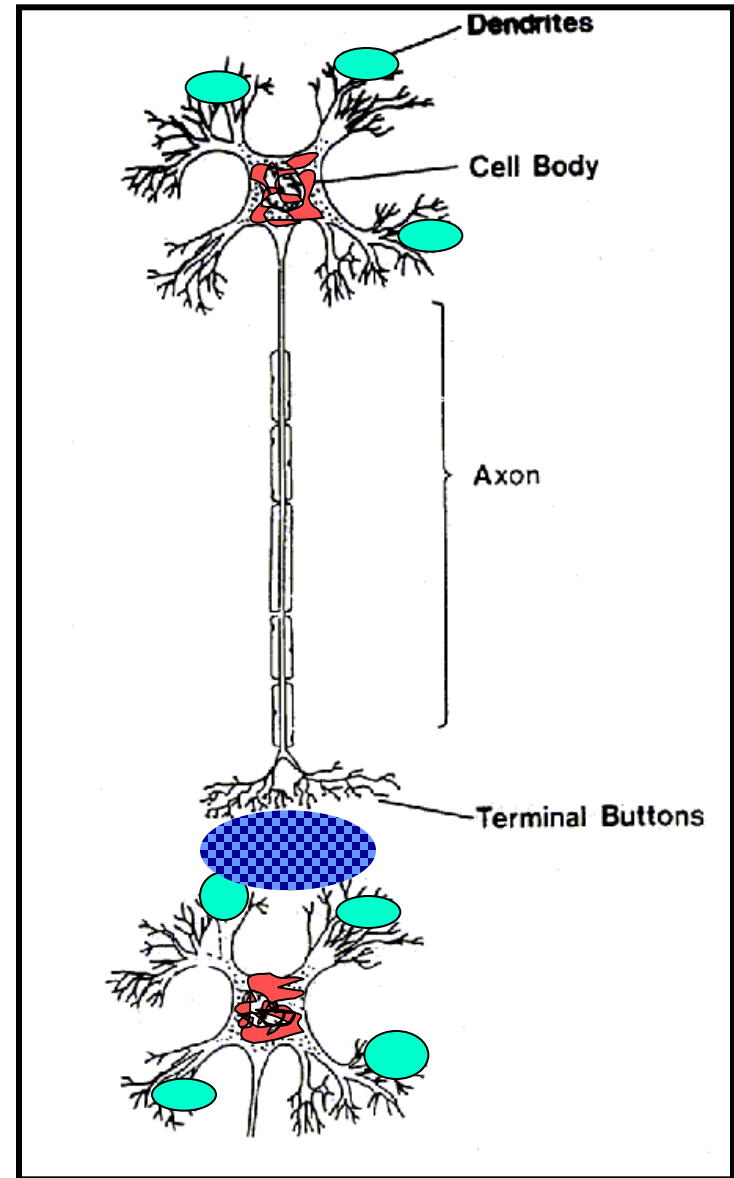
Frontotemporal dementia

Lewy body disease

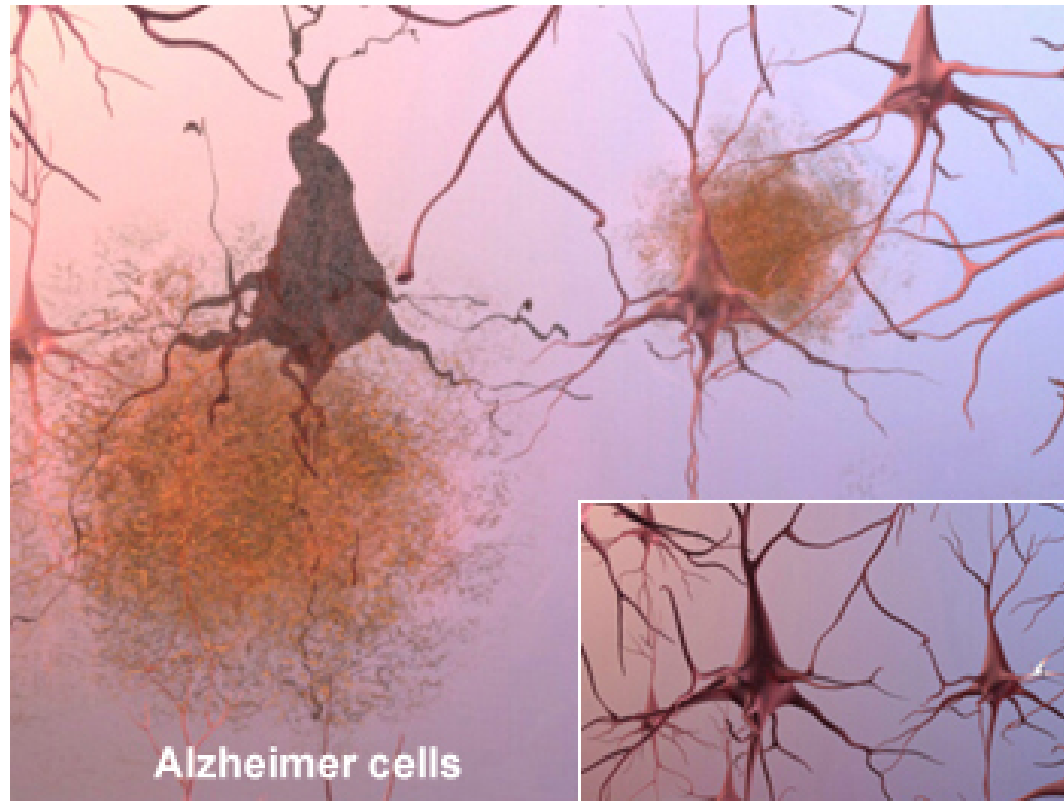
100+ causes

WHAT HAPPENS IN ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE?

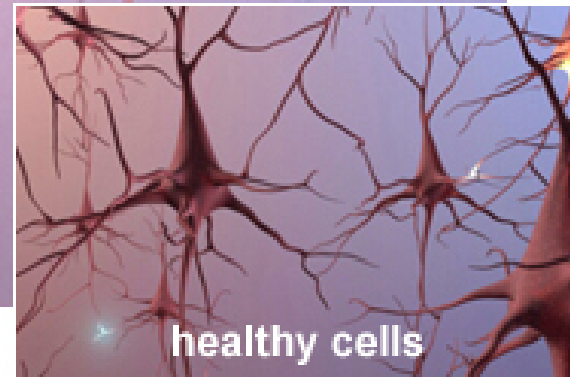
A single neuron



BRAIN CHANGES DUE TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

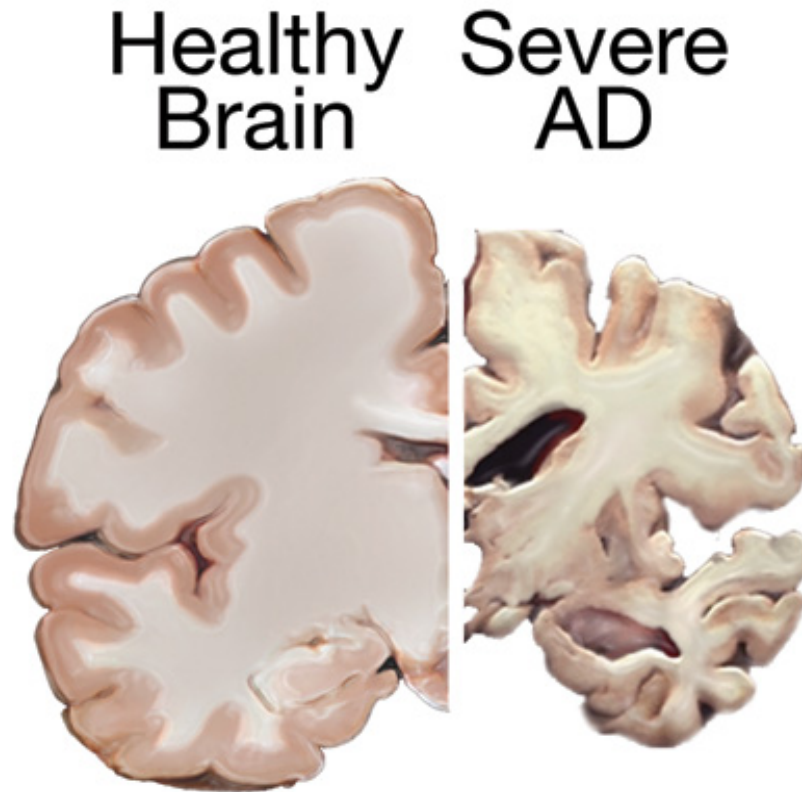


Alzheimer cells



healthy cells

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

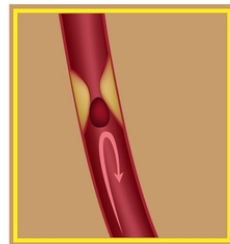
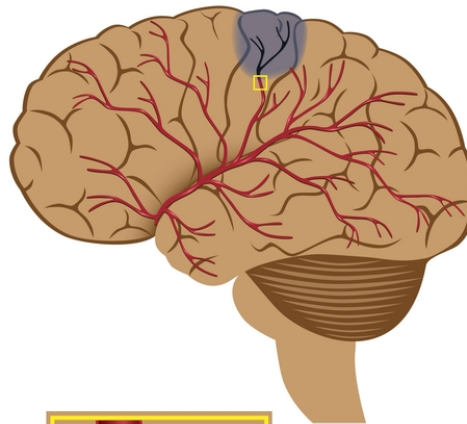


Source: Alzheimer's Association 2012

WHAT HAPPENS IN VASCULAR DEMENTIA?

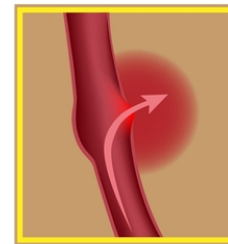
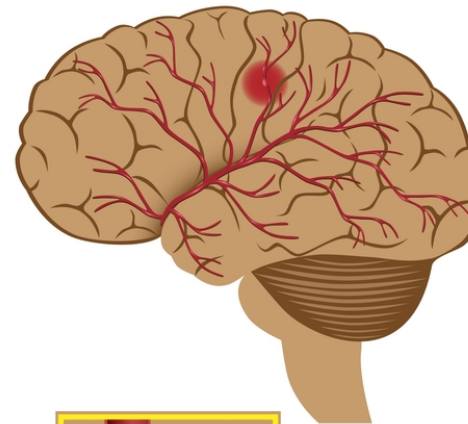
Brain Stroke

Ischemic Stroke



Blockage of blood vessels; lack of blood flow to affected area

Hemorrhagic Stroke



Rupture of blood vessels; leakage of blood



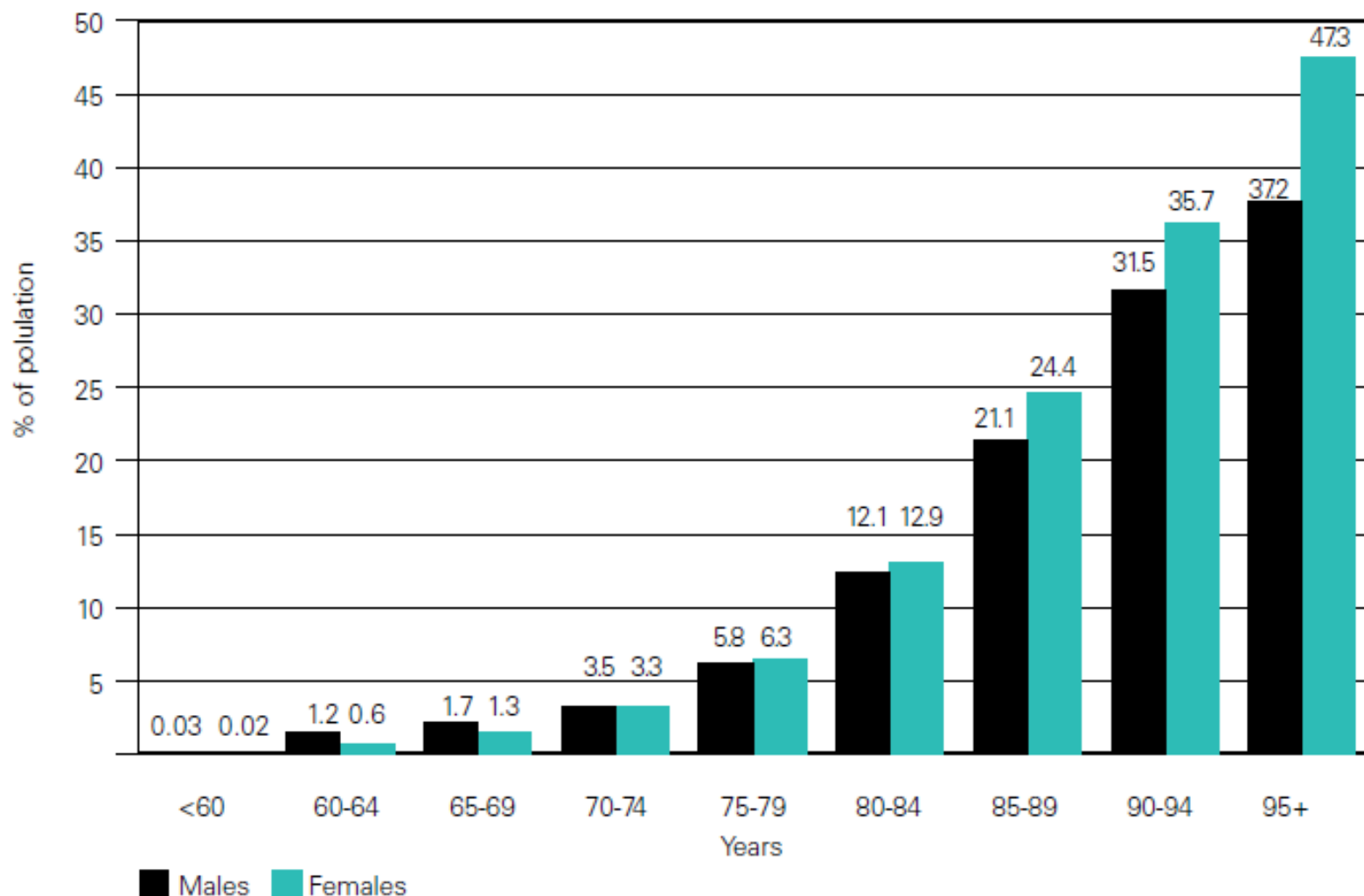
RISK FACTORS (NON-MODIFIABLE)

- Age
- Genes
- Down syndrome
- Family history

Source: *Dementia risk reduction: a practical guide for general practitioners*, 2nd ed., Nov.2011.



Chart 1.1: Estimated dementia prevalence rates in Australia 2009



Deloitte Access Economics 2011, *Dementia across Australia: 2011-2050*, report sponsored by Alzheimer's Australia, ACT.

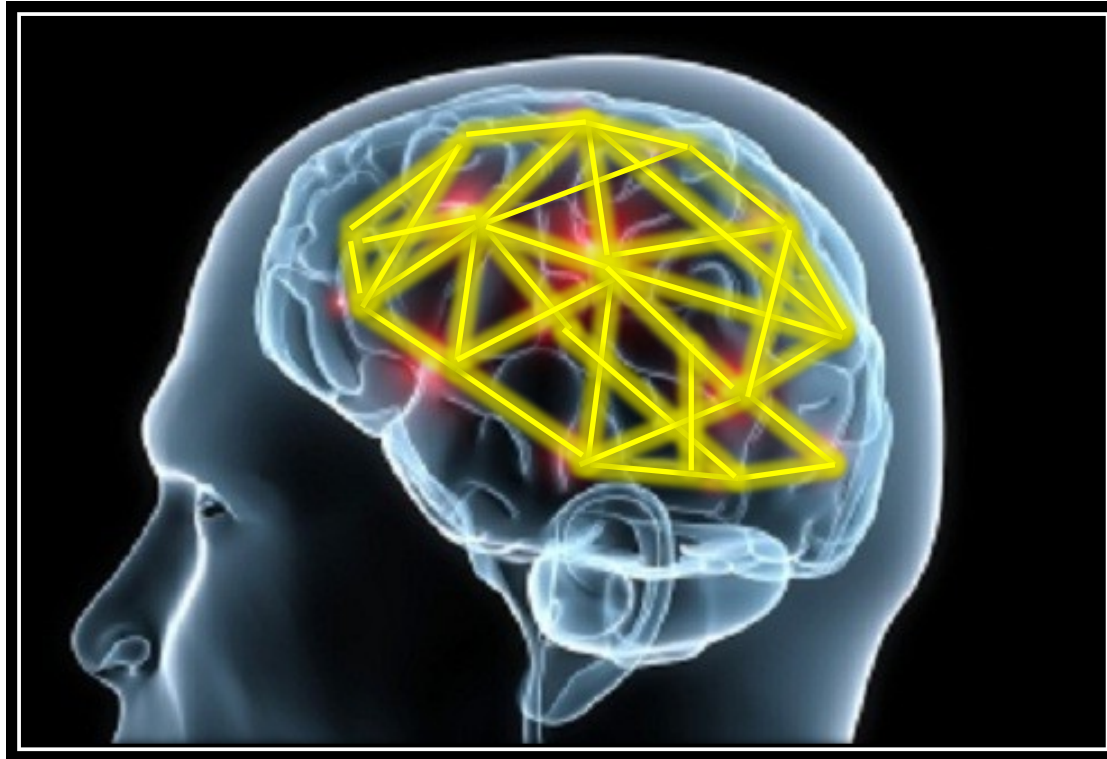


RISK FACTORS WE CAN INFLUENCE

- There are certain lifestyle and health factors that are good for brain health and may reduce the risk of developing dementia.
- They include maintaining **heart health**, **diet**, **exercise** and staying **socially connected**.
- To find out more about these, go to **yourbrainmatters.org.au** or request our community education program



So, why does behaviour
change?



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MYTHS

- *It's just old age!*
- *Dementia is like a 'second childhood'*
- *My wife's memory is great, so it can't be dementia!*
- *She doesn't talk much any more, so there's no way we can know what she wants.*



Myths

- *Bob never remembers who I am, so why bother visiting?*
- *There is nothing I can do to reduce my risk of getting dementia.*
- *Nothing can be done, so why bother with a diagnosis?*



**So, what should I do if
concerned?**



WHAT TO DO IF CONCERNED

- Visit your medical practitioner early
- Take with you a list of your **current concerns** and **current medications**
- Dementia is diagnosed by a medical practitioner through a **comprehensive assessment** and is best diagnosed by a specialist





HOW MIGHT I SUPPORT A PERSON WITH DEMENTIA

In my mind, one of the most important things you can do for me to make me feel comfortable in a group of people is to include me. Not so much by asking questions unless you are willing to help me answer them (which I would appreciate), but by including me in your smiles and eye contact ... I don't have as much to contribute to the conversation, but I love being equally included.

- From Robert and Anne Simpson, 1999

Through the wilderness of Alzheimer's" A Guide in two voices





*I can't change the
person with
dementia, but I can
change my
response*





**FOR MORE INFORMATION
CONTACT ALZHEIMER'S AUSTRALIA**

**NATIONAL DEMENTIA HELPLINE
1800 100 500**

AN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE



**TELEPHONE INTERPRETER SERVICE
131 450**

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