



Jean-Michel Etienne, Ph.D.



December 2025

This article is written by Grace Paterson, FNP-BC



## Understanding Dementia

### 🧠 What is Dementia?

Dementia is a general term for a decline in memory, thinking, and daily function caused by damage to brain cells. It is not a regular part of aging.

### 🧠 Types of Dementia

#### Alzheimer's Disease

The most common type (60–70% of cases).

Caused by abnormal protein buildup in the brain (plaques and tangles).

**Main symptoms:** memory loss, confusion, language problems, behavioral changes.

#### Vascular Dementia: the Second most common type.

Caused by reduced blood flow to the brain, often after a stroke.

**Symptoms:** poor judgment, slowed thinking, difficulty with problem-solving.

#### Lewy Body Dementia

Caused by abnormal protein deposits known as Lewy bodies.

**Symptoms:** hallucinations, sleep issues, movement problems (like Parkinson's).

#### Frontotemporal Dementia (FTD)

Caused by the degeneration of the frontal and temporal lobes.

**Symptoms:** changes in personality and behavior, decreased empathy, and language difficulties.

#### Mixed Dementia

A combination of two or more types, most often Alzheimer's and vascular dementia.

### ⚠️ Signs and Symptoms

- Memory loss, especially short-term.
- Confusion about time and place

- Difficulty completing familiar tasks
- Language difficulties
- Mood, behavior, or personality changes
- Withdrawal from hobbies and relationships

### 👉 Treatment & Natural Supports

#### 👉 Medications

Doctors may prescribe:

Cholinesterase inhibitors (donepezil, rivastigmine)

Memantine for moderate to severe cases

#### 👉 Natural Foods for Brain Health

- Berries – antioxidants for brain protection
- Leafy greens – rich in folate and vitamin K for brain health
- Fatty fish – omega-3s that boost memory and learning
- Nuts & seeds – vitamin E & healthy fats
- Whole grains – consistent brain energy
- Olive oil & avocado – improve circulation
- Legumes – B vitamins for nerve and brain health
- Turmeric – reduces inflammation in the brain
- Green tea – antioxidants for alertness

#### 👉 Lifestyle Habits

- Daily physical activity
- Mental activities like reading, puzzles, and music.
- Consistent routines
- Rest, hydration, and stress management
- Social connection and community

### 👉 Spiritual & Emotional Strength

"Even to your old age and gray hairs I am He, I am He who will sustain you." – Isaiah 46:4  
Faith, music, prayer, and fellowship bring comfort, reduce stress, and uplift both individuals and caregivers.

👉 **Takeaway:** Dementia has many forms, but knowledge, healthy living, spiritual support, and compassionate care can make a meaningful difference in quality of life.