

Understanding dementia-related hallucinations and delusions

Actor Portrayals



What is dementia?

Think of dementia as a general term for a range of conditions, including Alzheimer's disease. These conditions are caused when healthy brain cells are damaged and lose connections with each other. Common symptoms include changes in memory, thinking, and behavior—all of which can interfere with activities of daily life. In addition, dementia-related symptoms may include hallucinations and delusions.

What are the most common types of dementia?

Some of the most common forms of dementia include Alzheimer's disease dementia, vascular dementia, dementia with Lewy bodies, Parkinson's disease dementia, and frontotemporal dementia.

What are hallucinations and delusions?

Hallucinations are when someone sees, hears, smells, tastes, or feels things that are not there.

Delusions are when someone believes things that are not true, such as thinking someone is stealing from them.



What causes dementia-related hallucinations and delusions?

Like other dementia-related symptoms, hallucinations and delusions are caused by changes in the brain.

Are hallucinations and delusions a part of dementia?

Hallucinations and delusions can be related to dementia. In the United States, about 1 in 3 people with dementia may experience these symptoms.

What are common types of hallucinations and delusions?

See if you notice any of these signs in yourself or your loved one. You should also be on the look out for changes in behavior, mood, or personality that you would consider unusual or strange. Always tell your doctor about the signs you experience or observe. Your doctor will determine if they are related to dementia and will discuss what can be done to help you or your loved one.

Common Hallucinations



Seeing people or things that aren't there



Hearing things that others don't



Seeing animals or insects that aren't there



Seeing relatives inside the house who aren't there

Common Delusions



Believing comments, objects, or events are directed at you



Believing someone is trying to steal or hide things from you



Believing there are strangers in the house



Believing someone is trying to harm, poison, or deceive you

To see more examples of hallucinations and delusions, [click here](#)

Are hallucinations and delusions more common in some dementias?

Dementia-related hallucinations and delusions can occur across different kinds of dementia. But they are more common in dementia with Lewy bodies, Parkinson's disease dementia, and Alzheimer's disease dementia.

Can hallucinations and delusions get worse over time?

Dementia-related hallucinations and delusions may become more frequent over time and may persist. That's why you should speak to your doctor as soon as you notice these symptoms in yourself or your loved one.

Why is it important to speak to your doctor?

Dementia-related hallucinations and delusions can cause a person to lose touch with reality, and their loved ones to lose touch with them. These symptoms may sometimes be severe enough to cause a disruption in daily life.

For instance, these symptoms may affect a person's ability to do day-to-day activities or to communicate with other people. Others around them may find it difficult to care for or interact with them too. So speak to your doctor at the first sign of hallucinations and delusions to get the help you or your loved one needs.

Are there any advocacy organizations I can contact?

There are a number of advocacy organizations online that you can contact to connect with others who may know what you're going through. They can also provide resources that may help you handle everyday situations.

Here are 2 advocacy organizations you may consider reaching out to:



Don't wait to speak to your doctor

If you've seen these symptoms in yourself or your loved one, tell your doctor. For help starting that conversation, [fill out a discussion guide](#) and take it with you to your next appointment.



For more information about dementia-related hallucinations and delusions, visit [MoreThanMemoryLoss.com](https://www.morethanmemoryloss.com)