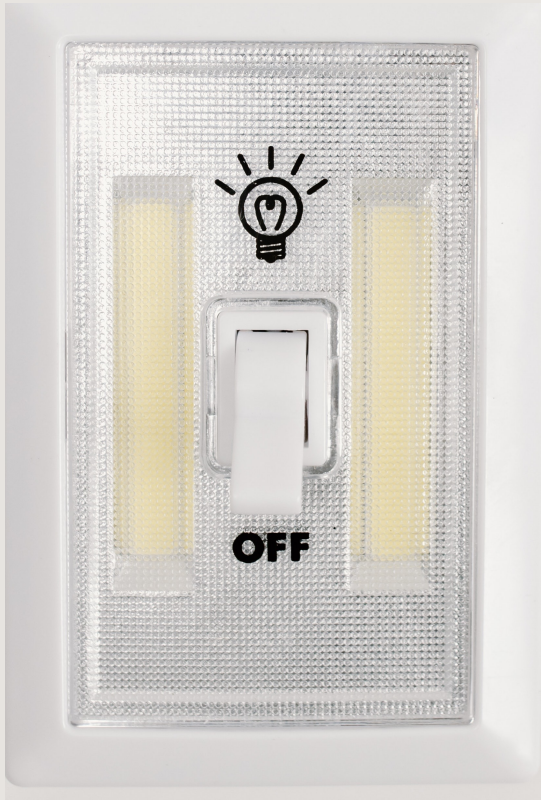




Tallaght
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An Academic Partner of Trinity College Dublin



TUH
Memory
Assessment
and Support
Service

Apathy

Factsheet

Dementia is a group of symptoms which can affect memory, thinking and behaviour severely enough to interfere with daily life.

Apathy is a symptom that some persons living with dementia may experience.

What is apathy?

Dementia causes changes in our brain and if the areas affected are those controlling our 'on switch', apathy can be a result.

It is a reduction or loss of motivation to do something, to pick a goal, to start and complete this goal, and be able to think about how successful that was. It can look like 'depression' because it involves a loss of interest and lack of energy.

A person with apathy and dementia is often not concerned by symptoms and changes may be more noticeable to others. Apathy can get worse when someone withdraws, stops doing things and loses their confidence and abilities. It can cause a cycle of sense of failure to take action leading to feelings of not being in control and loss of ability which then leads to further lack of activity.

What are the symptoms?

- Lack of concern about their problems or those of others
- Less effort or energy for things they may have enjoyed
- Less curiosity about new things
- Seem to not respond or care about personal events or news
- Less inclined to make plans and leaving this to others
- Knowing how to do something but needing prompting / coaxing

What can I do to manage symptoms of apathy?

Compared with depression and anxiety, there is less evidence about what treatments help someone with apathy and dementia. Non-drug approaches should generally be tried first. Studies have shown that engaging in life activities, music therapy, art therapy and cognitive stimulation can all help.

How can others support you best?

By understanding that you are not behaving in a different way on purpose

Making a routine can help a lot, so can use the use of aids like a daily timetable or whiteboard.

They can help you to start an action or activity avoiding the temptation to take over completely

Do joint tasks e.g. cooking together, going for a walk. Breaking up tasks and changing to a new one every so often.

Trying to do things with you rather than for you so that you feel involved.

Keep up energy levels by promoting sleep and rest but remembering to make sure that you get 30 minutes exercise five days a week.