

General Tips

- Eye-contact and touch are excellent ways to let people know their thoughts are being heard
- Make every effort to show interest in what the person with dementia is communicating or attempting to communicate
- Never contradict or argue with the person with dementia because this may lead to an extreme reaction such as yelling, crying or striking out
- Try to be sensitive to the limited understanding of the person with dementia
- Remember communication is a two - way process, you will need to adapt your communication style to ensure successful interaction with the person with dementia

Name: _____

Speech Language Therapist: _____

Ph: _____



The information contained in this leaflet is designed as a resource for people living with dementia and is to be used as a guide only. Please contact your speech and language therapist with any specific concerns about communicating with the person with dementia

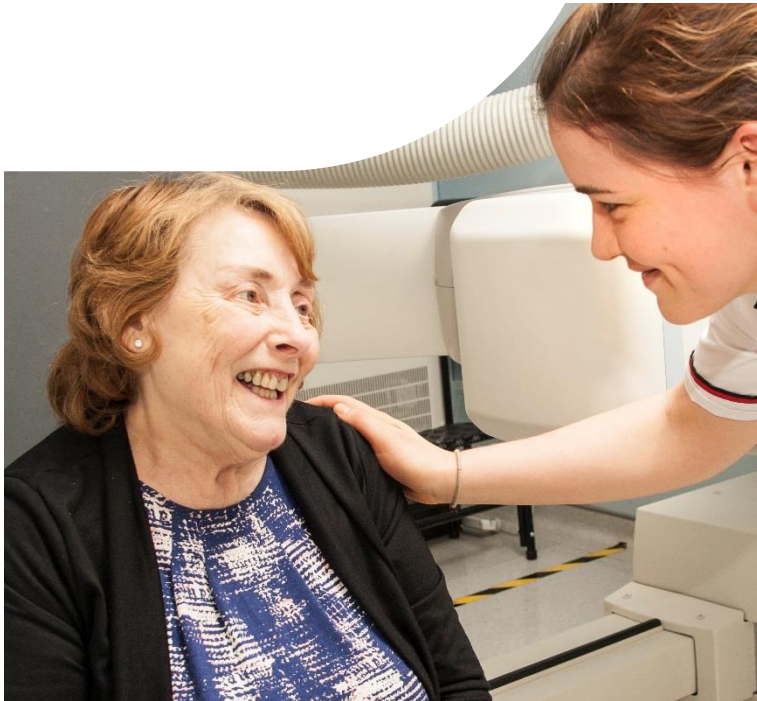
MPSLT006-02

Tallaght University Hospital | Ospidéal Ollscoile Thamhlachta

An Academic Partner of Trinity College Dublin

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

Communicating with the person with dementia



Dementia is a physical illness that causes damage to brain cells. This damage means a person's ability to remember, think, speak and do everyday things can change. As dementia progresses, difficulties focusing, thinking of words and remembering information can all be affected.



How Dementia Affects the Ability to Communicate

There can be;

- Short - term memory problems leading the person to lose their train of thought or repeat themselves again and again.
- Difficulties thinking of the words the person wants to say causing "empty speech" or speech lacking in content.
- Frustration at not understanding what is going on and not being able to make oneself understood.

The following are common communication problems experienced by those with dementia and some suggested solutions:

Presenting problem	Possible solutions
Not attending to person trying to talk to them	Make eye contact Identify yourself Call the person by name
Not understanding a question	Repeat the question or rephrase it Avoid open - ended questions Ask a yes/ no question Offer a choice between no more than two items e.g. "Do you want tea or coffee?" Give extra time to process a question
Not understanding information	Break down information into clear and simple stages Keep sentences short and simple Repeat important facts several times in a message Make sure it is clear who you are talking about. If you are talking about somebody, repeat their name frequently rather than saying "He" or "She" Use words that are familiar to the person with dementia
Getting frustrated or distressed at not being understood or being able to understand	Keep calm and be friendly Speak slowly and clearly in a low - pitched voice Make sure background noise is reduced