

# Quick Guide: 7 Stages of Dementia

Understanding the stages of dementia can help you recognize the early warning signs and make thoughtful decisions regarding appropriate care needs. Healthcare providers use these stages, known as the Global Deterioration Scale, to define the degree of cognitive decline. As stages 1-3 do not typically exhibit many symptoms, an official dementia diagnosis is not made until stage 4 and beyond.

Stage	Average Duration	Description
<b>STAGE 1:</b> No cognitive impairment	Varies	No noticeable symptoms
<b>STAGE 2:</b> Very mild cognitive decline	Varies	Forgets names, misplaces familiar objects; symptoms not evident to family or doctors
<b>STAGE 3:</b> Mild cognitive decline	2-7 years	Increased forgetfulness, decreased work performance, getting lost, difficulty finding right words, symptoms noticeable
<b>STAGE 4:</b> Moderate cognitive decline	2 years	Forgets recent events, difficulty concentrating, social withdrawal, emotional moodiness, lack of responsiveness, denial of symptoms
<b>STAGE 5:</b> Moderately severe cognitive decline	1.5 years	Pronounced memory loss, wandering, confusion, disorientation, needs assistance with daily activities such as bathing and getting dressed
<b>STAGE 6:</b> Severe cognitive decline	2.5 years	Difficulty sleeping, incontinence, aggression, anxiety, pronounced memory loss, inability to recognize others, personality changes
<b>STAGE 7:</b> Very severe cognitive decline	1.5-2.5 years	Can no longer speak, can't move without help, lack of physical coordination, severely impaired bodily function including chewing, swallowing and breathing

## When to Seek Memory Care

Though it can be beneficial from the early stages of dementia, when to seek memory care will vary depending on a person's symptoms, health, living situation and other factors that should be discussed with a physician. To learn more about memory care services at Atria, contact your local community and schedule a tour.