

# Next steps

This help sheet describes the different services available for people diagnosed with dementia, their families and carers. These include specialised dementia services, health and home support services.

Caring for someone with dementia can be difficult, and at times feel a bit overwhelming. However there are many organisations that provide a range of services to help families and carers continue supporting people with dementia at home.

## Getting the information you need

Finding out about dementia and the immediate help available is usually a priority soon after a diagnosis is made.

Dementia Australia can help you learn what is happening, provide emotional support, information, education and counselling. Call the **National Dementia Helpline** on **1800 100 500**.

Information on aged care services can be found on the My Aged Care website [myagedcare.gov.au](https://myagedcare.gov.au) or by phoning **1800 200 422** (free call except from mobile phones).

The Carer Gateway website [carergateway.gov.au](https://carergateway.gov.au) and contact centre **1800 422 737** (free call except from mobile phones) provides practical information and resources to support carers.

The Carer Advisory and Counselling Service provides carers with information and advice about their caring role and about relevant carer services and entitlements. Contact your closest Carer Advisory and Counselling Service on **1800 242 636**.

## Support

Dementia Australia can link people to a large number of support groups throughout Australia. Many people find comfort and practical assistance by attending these meetings with others who know what it is like to care for a person with dementia. Support groups bring together families, carers and friends of people with dementia under the guidance of a group facilitator. The facilitator is usually a health professional or someone with firsthand experience of caring for a person with dementia.

“ It helps to know you’re not alone...listening to how others deal with similar problems...it makes me feel much better to know that there are other people with a similar caring role. ”

## Counselling

Dementia Australia provides a free specialist counselling service for people with dementia, their families and carers which aims to support and assist people throughout the course of the illness. Call the **National Dementia Helpline** on **1800 100 500**.

## Health Services

The family doctor will probably be the health professional providing on-going health care for the family and the person with dementia. It is important that family members and the doctor are able to communicate comfortably as this will be of great benefit to all concerned.

The Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) provides assistance to older people in determining their needs for residential respite or residential care. Health care workers such as geriatricians, social workers and occupational therapists work on the teams. You can contact your nearest ACAT by calling **My Aged Care**.

Help is available for people with continence problems and their family and carers. The Continence Foundation of Australia can be contacted on **1800 330 066** or visit [continence.org.au](http://continence.org.au).

## Respite Care

Families and carers need to have regular breaks from caring. One way to do this is to arrange regular respite care for the person with dementia.

There are various ways to take a break, including residential respite care for the person with dementia. Some agencies are able to provide flexible respite, which may be appropriate for people with younger onset dementia.

The Commonwealth Home Support Programme can assist by providing Government-subsidised access to a variety of respite services including:

- In-home respite
- Centre-based day respite
- Overnight or weekend respite
- Community access respite
- Residential respite care (short stays in aged care homes)

Respite care can also be arranged in the case of an emergency. Contact **My Aged Care** for further information.

## Commonwealth Home Support Services

The Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) may help with low level care in the person's own home or assistance with everyday tasks.

### Home Care packages

If a person's needs are more complex, they may need a Home Care Package. A Home Care Package may include services similar to CHSP (such as help with transport, home cleaning, showering, podiatry) but it is designed for more specific needs and services are coordinated.

All Home Care Packages are now delivered on a Consumer Directed Care (CDC) basis, meaning that families and carers have more say and more choice in what they receive.

A home support assessment conducted by the Regional Assessment Service (RAS) will determine what help is required.

Contact **My Aged Care** for further information.

### Independent living

The Independent Living Centre (ILC) is in most States and Territories and offers a number of services designed to promote safe living. Information is available on a number of products including smoke detectors, hot water service temperature regulators and monitoring services. Advice is also available on home modifications and home design. Contact numbers for ILCs in each state can be obtained by contacting the **National Dementia Helpline** on **1800 100 500**, visiting [ilcaustralia.org.au](http://ilcaustralia.org.au) or ringing the Independent Living Centres Advisory Service on **1300 885 886**.

### Further Information

Dementia Australia offers support, information, education and counselling. Contact the National Dementia Helpline on **1800 100 500**, or visit our website at [dementia.org.au](http://dementia.org.au)



For language assistance phone the Translating and Interpreting Service on **131 450**