

# Understanding the Differences Between Dementia and Depression

Troubled by the early warning signs of dementia? First rule out that it is not depression. To receive proper diagnosis and care, it is critical to ensure that the symptoms are from dementia and not depression.

Dementia is a brain disorder.

Depression is a mood disorder.

## Is it Dementia or Depression?

### Symptoms of Dementia

- Mental decline happens slowly
- Confused and disoriented; becomes lost in familiar locations
- Difficulty with short-term memory
- Writing, speaking and motor skills are impaired
- Doesn't notice memory problems or seem to care

### Symptoms of Depression

- Mental decline is relatively rapid
- Knows the correct time, date, and where he or she is
- Difficulty concentrating
- Language and motor skills are slow, but normal
- Notices or worries about memory problems

**Notes:** Use the space below to enter observations about the person potentially suffering from dementia. This page can then be shared with a trained medical professional to prepare for the visit and to accurately assist in a diagnosis.

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Help Guide: [www.helpguide.org/mental/depression\\_elderly.htm#dementia](http://www.helpguide.org/mental/depression_elderly.htm#dementia)