



**Royal Berkshire**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Memory problems

Information for patients  
and carers

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# **This leaflet is for patients with possible memory and thinking difficulties, and their family and carers.**

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## **Why are people concerned about my memory?**

When you were admitted to hospital (RBH) you had an assessment and it was noticed that you have some difficulties with memory and thinking. You may have taken a test to detect memory and thinking problems, such as dementia.

This test not only looks at memory, but other areas of cognition such as spatial awareness, abstract thought, and language and numeracy skills.



## **Physical illness and memory problems**

It is very common for people to become confused if they are physically unwell and it is possible that your confusion and memory difficulties are due to this cause.

This is because any physical illness can cause people to think less clearly and lose their memory. This is particularly common in older people. Because our brains are very delicate organs, recovery can take some time – it may take up to three months for an older person's thinking to return to normal after a physical illness.

## **Other memory problems**

However, it is important to consider other causes of memory problems as well. Some people with memory problems will be diagnosed with an illness called dementia. There are different types of dementia, the commonest of which is called Alzheimer's disease.

## **Do I have dementia?**

When someone is physically unwell, it is not possible to diagnose dementia, as the physical illness may cause memory problems. The team at the RBH would like you to have a further assessment of your memory and thinking at a later date to see if any problems are still there after you have recovered from your current illness.

## **What will happen next?**

You will be referred to the Memory Clinic. The referral may be sent by the hospital doctors or by your own GP. After leaving hospital, you will be sent an appointment for around four to six months later. This delay is to allow your brain to fully recover after your physical illness.

## **What happens at the Memory Clinic?**

You will be invited to attend with a friend or relative. You will be seen by a doctor or nurse who will discuss your memory and thinking with you. They will do some pencil and paper tests to assess your memory and thinking.

## **Do I need other tests?**

Everybody who has memory problems should have some basic blood tests and some people may have a CT scan of their brain (similar to having an X-ray).

These tests may have been done while you were in hospital. If the tests have already been done, they do not need to be repeated unless they showed anything wrong.

## **Should I do anything to help my memory while I am waiting for the appointment?**

You should focus on recovering from your physical illness and returning to health. Make sure you eat well and try to take a small amount of exercise every day.

If you enjoy doing any puzzles such as crosswords or Sudoku, these can be helpful in keeping your brain active.

If you do find you have problems with your memory, you may find using a diary or reminder cards helpful.

## **What can I do if I have any more questions?**

You can ask the staff looking after you at the RBH, or after leaving hospital, you can ask your own GP. If you feel things get worse rather than better after you leave hospital, you should tell your GP.

## **Memory clinics**

There are three different Memory Clinics, depending on where you live. The hospital staff or your GP should be able to tell you which clinic you will be referred to.

### **Newbury Memory Clinic**

Hillcroft House, Rookes Way Thatcham, RG18 3HR

Tel: 01635 292070

### **Reading Memory Clinic**

Hazelwood, Prospect Park Hospital, Reading RG30 4EJ

Tel: 0118 960 5959

### **Wokingham Memory Clinic**

Barkham Day Hospital, Wokingham Community Hospital,  
Wokingham, RG41 2RE

Tel: 0118 949 5101

More information on services provided by Older People's Mental Health Services can be found at Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust's website

[www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk](http://www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk)

You can also get further information on dementia from:

### **The Alzheimer's Society**

[www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk)

Helpline: 0300 222 1122

### **Dementia UK**

[www.dementiauk.org](http://www.dementiauk.org)

Telephone: 0207 6974160

Email: [info@dementiauk.org](mailto:info@dementiauk.org)

### **Berkshire Age UK**

[www.ageuk.org.uk/berkshire/our-services/dementia-support](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/berkshire/our-services/dementia-support)

Telephone: 0118 959 4242

Email: [info@ageukberkshire.org.uk](mailto:info@ageukberkshire.org.uk)

**Notes:**

To find out more about our Trust visit  
[www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

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another language or format.**

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February 2011

Reviewed by Dr Aubretia McColl: May 2024. Next review due: May 2026