

Questions to Ask the Doctor When You Suspect Cognitive Decline

About Symptoms and Their Meaning

1. I've been noticing memory changes / confusion / personality shifts—could this be normal ageing, or should we explore further?
2. What signs should I be tracking to help understand if this is just stress or something more serious like dementia?
3. Is there a checklist or symptom diary you recommend to monitor these changes over time?

About the Diagnostic Process

4. What kind of medical assessments can help us understand what's going on—blood tests, imaging, or cognitive screening?
5. Would a brain scan like an MRI or CT be useful at this stage, and what can it reveal or not reveal?
6. Can you do a basic memory or cognitive screening test today, or refer us to someone who can?

Requesting Specialist Input

7. Should we see a neurologist or psychiatrist to get a deeper evaluation, and can you provide a referral?
8. Would a neuropsychological evaluation help clarify the diagnosis? Could you refer us to a qualified neuropsychologist?
9. What exactly will a neuropsychologist assess, and how is it different from what a neurologist or psychiatrist does?

About Specific Diagnoses

10. What conditions could be causing this memory or behavior change—are there reversible causes we should rule out?
11. Could this be mild cognitive impairment (MCI), dementia, depression, or something else entirely? How do we tell the difference?
12. If a dementia diagnosis is made, how can we find out what type it is—Alzheimer's, vascular, FTD, or something else?

About Treatment and Planning

13. If it is dementia, what treatments are available, and how can they help? Are there medications that slow the disease?
14. Are there non-drug treatments or brain stimulation therapies we can explore?
15. What lifestyle or dietary changes could make a difference right now?

About Ongoing Support and Resources

16. What kind of follow-up should we expect—how often should we come in for reassessment?

17. Can you recommend any support groups, educational materials, or care resources in our city or language?
18. Is there a dementia care team or clinic you recommend that includes psychologists, social workers, or occupational therapists?

For Future Planning

19. How should we plan for safety, driving, financial decision-making, or living arrangements as things progress?
20. When and how should we involve other family members or discuss future care preferences?