**Worried about your memory?**

Memory slips happen to most of us some time or another, and are usually just a nuisance**.** But memory problems that are getting worse or starting to affect your daily life may be a sign of a medical condition. There are several medical reasons for memory loss, which can include depression, infections, vitamin and thyroid deficiencies, as well as dementia. It is important to see your GP as they can help identify the cause of the problem. If you are concerned, you should make an appointment to see your GP. If you are concerned about the memory of someone close to you, encourage them to visit their GP. You might start the conversation by gently asking the person if they’ve been feeling any different from usual or are struggling with anything.

There are many services available to support people with dementia and their families – and the earlier you seek help, the earlier you will receive the support that can help you manage the condition. This also might mean that you can make important decisions and choices now about your future. There may be a time when you are no longer able to make some important decisions.

**What is dementia?**

Dementia is not a single illness but a group of symptoms caused by damage to the brain. It is more common in people over 65, but dementia can also affect younger people.

**What are the symptoms of dementia?**

Dementia affects everyone in different ways, but common symptoms include:

* struggling to remember recent events, although you can easily recall things that happened in the past.
* finding it hard to follow conversations or programmes on TV
* forgetting the names of friends or everyday objects
* cannot recall things you have heard, seen or read
* noticing that you repeat yourself or lose the thread of what you are saying
* having problems thinking and reasoning
* feeling anxious, depressed or angry about your forgetfulness
* finding that other people start to comment on your forgetfulness
* feeling confused even when in a familiar environment.

**What if it is dementia?**

Although there is currently no cure for dementia, with treatment, advice and support, many people who have the condition lead active, fulfilling lives. In some cases a specialist may be able to prescribe drugs that can lessen symptoms for a while. You should also be offered the chance to attend groups or take part in activities that may help you and any carer to cope better. Your local social services department can do an assessment and may be able to work with you to arrange or provide services to support you at home.

If you are worried, contact your GP. For further advice, call the National Dementia Helpline on 0300 222 1122 (Mon-Wed 9am-8pm, Thurs–Fri 9am-5pm, Sat-Sun 10am-4pm). You can also find more information online at alzheimers.org.uk/memoryworry

**Support for people with dementia and their carers run by Bexley Alzheimer’s Society:**

Carer Information and Support programme (CrISP); Carers Support group; Dementia Café; Singing for the Brain; Activity Groups. Our Dementia Adviser can provide initial one to one contact to give advice and information. Our Dementia Support workers can give more in depth support to help people gain a better understanding of dementia and with accessing appropriate services. For more information please get in touch:

Alzheimer’s Society, Wolsley House, Wolsley Close, Crayford DA1 4BE

Telephone: 01322 524950 Email: bexleybranch@alzheimer.org.uk