



Resources: **What to expect**

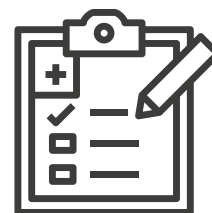
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Being diagnosed with dementia is not a single step but a process that can take several weeks.

It often starts with the person or family members realising that there is something wrong and talking to their GP. There will then be various stages of assessments and medical tests before any diagnosis is made.

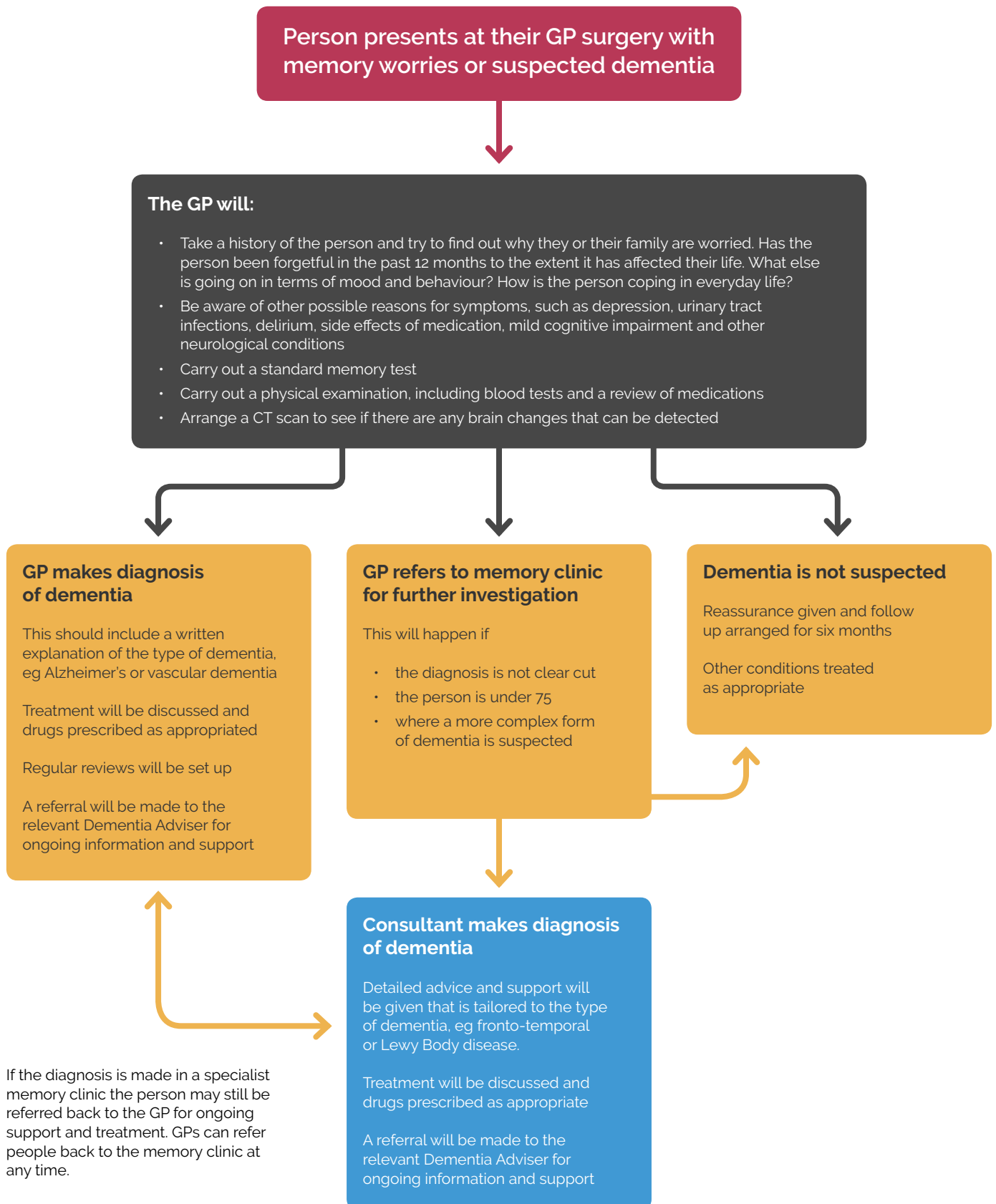
In Wiltshire, most dementia diagnoses are made by GPs, supported by specialist memory nurses. However the GP may make a referral to a memory clinic or specialist consultant in cases where the diagnosis is not clear-cut, where the person is younger (usually below the age of 75) or where a more complex form of dementia is suspected.

To get the most out of the consultations, is it a good idea to write down in advance any worrying symptoms or questions to ask the GP. You can use our checklist to help do this.



If you are going to a GP surgery, you may wish to ask for a double appointment so you do not feel rushed. When the diagnosis is finally being given it is sensible to ask about any words you don't understand, and to ask the doctor to be clear. For example, if a GP or health care professional refers to 'memory problems' you may want to ask 'does that mean I have dementia' or 'is that the same as Alzheimer's?' You may also need to remind them to send you the diagnosis in writing.

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A diagnosis of dementia is a lot to take in and you will have a lot of questions. These may include questions about:

- **the likely progression of the dementia**
- **any medication which may help**
- **how to 'live well' with the condition**
- **the support that is available**
- **planning for the future.**



GPs, memory nurses or specialist consultants will discuss the medical side of these questions and refer you to an Alzheimer's Support **Dementia Adviser** for information on the practical, financial and emotional support in your area.

