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## Vascular Dementia Overview

Vascular dementia develops when impaired blood flow to parts of the brain deprives cells of food and oxygen. The diagnosis may be clearer when symptoms appear soon after a single major stroke blocks a large blood vessel and disrupts the blood supply to a significant portion of the brain. There is also a form in which a series of very small strokes or infarcts block small blood vessels. Over time their combined effects become noticeable (multi-infarct dementia). Symptoms of vascular dementia can vary, depending on the specific brain areas deprived of blood. The person may have a past history of heart attacks, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, hardening of the arteries, diabetes, or other risk factors for heart disease are often present.

## Symptoms of Vascular Dementia

1. Memory problems may or may not be a prominent symptom, depending on whether brain regions important in memory are affected.
2. Confusion, which may get worse at night.
3. Difficulty concentrating, planning, communicating and following instructions.
4. Reduced ability to carry out daily activities.
5. Physical symptoms associated with stroke, such as sudden weakness, difficulty speaking or confusion.
6. MRI of brain may show characteristic abnormalities associated with vascular damage.