



Australian Dementia Network
REGISTRY. CLINICS. TRIALS.

Memory and Cognition Clinic Guidelines

Client Guide



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Who is this Guide for?

This Client Guide is based on the ‘**Memory and Cognition Clinic Guidelines: National Service Guidelines for Specialised Dementia and Cognitive Decline Services in Australia**’. This Guide was put together for current and future clients of Memory and Cognition Clinics. ‘Clients’ are defined as people who are seeking an assessment at a Memory and Cognition Clinic and their support persons (e.g., family members, friends).

What is a Memory and Cognition Clinic?



Australians who are concerned about their cognition or memory can receive a formal assessment for dementia and other cognitive concerns by a range of health professionals in several health service settings, one of which being a **Memory and Cognition Clinic (MC Clinic)**.

Important information about MC Clinics

- Highly specialised in the assessment of dementia and related brain disorders
- Assess people who have complex symptoms
- Employ a team from a range of health backgrounds (e.g. nurse, geriatrician)
- Almost all require a referral from a GP or another health professional (e.g., geriatrician)
- Accept and prioritise clients based on their need for a specialised assessment.



Accessing an MC Clinic



In addition to face-to-face appointments, it is important that the MC Clinic offers other options if you cannot get to the clinic easily:

- **Telehealth** – allows you to attend the assessment using a computer with internet access or a phone.
- **Roving service** – clinic travels to your community to offer their services (mainly for remote areas).

Waiting Times



Clinic staff understand that waiting for a medical assessment can be frustrating and scary when you are unsure of why you are experiencing cognitive problems. However, many MC Clinics have a waiting list.

The Guidelines recommend a maximum waiting time of:

- **30 days** if you need an **urgent*** assessment
- **90 days** if your assessment is not urgent.

* at the discretion of each clinic

Prior to the Appointment



While you are waiting for an appointment, the MC Clinic should provide you with written information about:

- **Types and purpose of your assessment(s)**
- **Costs** and appointment **duration**
- **Location, parking** or **public transport** availability
- **What to bring** for the appointment
- **General support services** e.g., Dementia Australia

MC Clinics can also provide you with a **referral to an experienced counsellor** if you are experiencing distress while waiting for your appointment and require psychological support.

Receiving the Diagnosis



Receiving a diagnosis of cognitive impairment or dementia can be overwhelming. Some clients might be open to discussing their care plan straight away, while others might need more time. **Please tell your clinician your wishes and ask for as much time as you need.**

The Guidelines encourage MC Clinics to:

- Tell you your diagnosis as soon as all assessments are completed
- Provide written information about your diagnosis and summary of the next steps (care plan) in simple terms
- Be flexible with the number and duration of appointments required to communicate the diagnosis and discuss the care plan
- Work with your GP to help implement the care plan

Support, Advice, and Care after the Diagnosis



The next steps after a dementia diagnosis may not always be clear. Very few Australian MC Clinics currently have the resources to offer ongoing and detailed client support post diagnosis. Nevertheless, they can be helpful in planning the next steps and providing relevant information and referrals to help you manage your diagnosis.

MC Clinics are encouraged to follow up with you at least once within the year after the diagnosis. During the follow-up appointment, clinic staff will determine if you are happy with the support you are receiving or require additional assessments or help. MC Clinics are further encouraged to remain a point of contact to answer further questions.

Relevant Information

MC Clinics may discuss the following with you after your diagnosis:

- Carer support
- Beneficial lifestyle changes
- Behaviour management interventions
- Risk reduction education
- Management of safety concerns
- Written personalised strategies to help the client live with dementia (e.g., use of medication boxes, phone reminders)
- Involvement in research and clinical trials

Service Provision & Referrals

- Psychological support
- Nursing support
- Occupational therapy
- Speech and language therapy
- Group based programs
- Dietetic advice
- Intervention programs (e.g., exercise, neuropsychological interventions)

With additional referrals to:

- Dementia Australia, community care services, driving assessments, legal & financial counselling

Contact us

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