

## Physical Changes Related to Dementia<sup>1</sup>

Contributes to or Triggers Behaviour	Description of Physical Change	Examples of Possible Behaviours	Screening Tool and Clinical Indicators
Continence	Loss of the ability to maintain bladder and bowel control related to the neurological disease	Restlessness or pulling at clothing due to uncomfortable sensation of wet or soiled clothing	<b>RAI:</b> Urinary incontinence CAP, Bowel conditions CAP
Chewing/ Swallowing	Loss of the ability to coordinate chewing and swallowing putting resident at risk for choking or aspirating food/fluid	Spitting out food, pocketing food in cheeks, refusing food	<b>RAI:</b> Undernutrition CAP, Dehydration CAP; Consult with OT, Dietician, or Speech Language Pathologist
Mobility / Motor skills and coordination	Slowing of walking speed, shuffling, shorter steps, and stooped posture; gradual decrease in the resident's ability to perform everyday tasks	Inactivity or reduced participation due to fear of falling	<b>RAI:</b> ADL CAP, ADL short form scale, ADL long form scale, ADL self-performance hierarchy scale, Falls CAP; Consult with OT or PT
Standing/Balance/ /transfers/grasp	General motor slowing, decrease balance (standing or sitting), impaired ability to sequence motor tasks, muscle rigidity or tremor, grasp reflex, closing arms close to body, and contractures	May resist care	<b>RAI:</b> ADL CAP, ADL short form scale, ADL long form scale; Consult with PT
Sleeping habits	Increased sleep fragmentation, longer sleep onset latency, decreased sleep efficiency, decreased total sleep time, unusual breathing patterns while asleep	Awake at night and sleeping during day, irritability due to fatigue	Sleep mapping Depression screening tools
Temperature regulation	Loss of ability to maintain body temperature due to impaired internal regulating system	Putting on many layers or removing clothes, kicking off blankets	Body temperature
Eating patterns	Loss of appetite or interest in food; Increased preference for sweet foods; Loss of satiety	Food/sweets seeking, taking other people's food, collecting and hiding food	<b>RAI:</b> Undernutrition CAP, Dehydration CAP; Weight
Hearing	Difficulty in filtering out background noise, identifying and locating sounds	Startles easily, inability to pay attention, restless/yelling when over stimulated by noise	<b>RAI:</b> Communication CAP
Vision	Loss of ability to track fast moving objects, narrowing of up/down and side vision, difficulty with colour contrast	Startles easily, appears anxious/pushing/yelling when over stimulated by movement	Peripheral Vision Screening Test

**RAI:** refers to the RAI MDS 2.0 tool;

<sup>1</sup> Disclaimer: Examples are not exhaustive and may not apply for all dementias.