

Lewy body disease (LBD) is a type of dementia that affects thinking, movement, behaviour, and mood. It occurs when abnormal deposits of alpha-synuclein protein called Lewy bodies accumulate in the brain. This condition is often misdiagnosed as Alzheimer's disease or Parkinson's disease.

The symptoms of LBD can vary from person to person but typically include:

Cognitive difficulties: problems with memory, visuospatial function, and language.

Movement problems: tremors, stiffness, shuffling gait, and balance problems.

Visual illusions and hallucinations: seeing things that aren't there.

Fluctuations in alertness and attention: drowsiness, staring into space, or periods of confusion.

Sleep disturbances: vivid dreams, acting out dreams, and sleepwalking.

Changes in behaviour and mood: depression, anxiety, and apathy.

Postural hypotension: lightheadness and fainting on standing

LBD can be challenging to diagnose because it shares symptoms with other conditions like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease. To diagnose LBD, a neurologist will take a detailed medical history, perform a physical and neurological examination, and order imaging tests such as a CT scan or MRI to rule out other causes of the symptoms.

In addition, a specialised brain scan called a dopamine transporter scan (DaTscan) may also be used to help confirm the diagnosis.

There is currently no cure for LBD, but there are treatments available that can help manage symptoms and improve quality of life. These include:

- Medications: There are a variety of medications that can be used to manage LBD symptoms, including medications for movement disorders, depression, and anxiety.
- Avoiding certain medications: Some medications can seriously worsen motor function or hallucinations; a note should be made on the medical to avoid anti-sickness drugs and anti-psychotic medications.
- Supportive care: Occupational and physical therapy can help manage movement problems, while speech therapy can help with communication issues.

- Caregiver support: Caring for someone with LBD can be challenging, and support groups can provide a valuable source of information and emotional support for caregivers.
- Safety precautions: Due to the potential for falls, hallucinations, and sleep disturbances, safety precautions such as removing trip hazards, locking doors and windows, and installing night lights are recommended.
- Advanced care planning: As LBD progresses, it's important to have advanced care planning discussions with family and healthcare providers to ensure that the person's wishes are respected and appropriate care is provided.

LBD is a complex and challenging condition that can affect a person's physical and mental health. Although there is currently no cure, there are treatments available that can help manage symptoms and improve quality of life.

If you or a loved one are experiencing symptoms of LBD, it's essential to seek medical attention from a neurologist who is experienced in diagnosing and managing this condition. Further support is available from [Dementia UK](#) and [Parkinson's UK](#).

