The symptoms of vascular dementia can be similar to those of Alzheimer’s, and both conditions can occur at the same time. Symptoms of vascular dementia can begin suddenly or gradually and worsen or improve over time. Initial symptoms may include problems with attention, processing speed, memory, problem-solving, and orientation.

Vascular dementia results from injuries to the vessels supplying blood to the brain, often after a stroke or long-term cardiovascular problems. Risk factors include atrial fibrillation, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, smoking, unhealthy diet, lack of exercise, and sleep apnea. Vascular dementia accounts for up to 30% of all dementia cases. This type of dementia is often managed with drugs to prevent strokes and to improve vascular health.

Behavioral and cognitive symptoms may fluctuate over days or weeks based on underlying vascular health. Depression, anxiety, or unusual emotional reactions may be present.

See signs? Talk to your doctor.