

Behavioral Variant FTD (bvFTD)

AFTD

Know the Signs ... Know the Symptoms

Behavioral variant FTD, the most common form of FTD, is responsible for about half of all cases of this disease. BvFTD is also frequently referred to as frontotemporal dementia or Pick's disease.

The hallmarks of bvFTD are personality changes, apathy, and a progressive decline in socially appropriate behavior, judgment, self-control, and empathy. Unlike in Alzheimer's disease, memory is usually relatively spared in bvFTD. People with bvFTD typically do not recognize the changes in their own behavior, or exhibit awareness or concern for the effect their behavior has on the people around them. **The following are possible symptoms of bvFTD:**

SYMPTOMS	POSSIBLE SIGNS
Disinhibition A loss or lack of restraint based on social norms, leading to inappropriate behavior and impulsivity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Making uncharacteristic rude or offensive comments• Ignoring other people's personal space• Shoplifting, reckless spending• Touching strangers or inappropriate sexual behavior• Aggressive outbursts
Apathy Indifference or lack of interest in previously meaningful activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loss of interest in work, hobbies, and personal relationships• Neglect of personal hygiene• Loss of initiative
Emotional blunting Loss of warmth, empathy, or concern for others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indifference to important events (e.g., death of a family member or friend);• Failure to recognize that loved ones are upset or unhappy
Compulsive or ritualistic behaviors Single behaviors or routines that are performed over and over.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Repeating words or phrases• Hand rubbing, clapping• Re-reading the same book over and over again• Hoarding• Walking to the same place at the same time every day

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SYMPTOMS	POSSIBLE SIGNS
<p>Changes in Eating Habits or Diet</p> <p>Excessive, compulsive or inappropriate eating and drinking, or other pronounced changes in dietary preferences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Binge eating• Carbohydrate craving• Eating only specific foods• Increased or first-time use of tobacco products• Excessive water or alcohol consumption• Attempting to consume inedible objects
<p>Deficits in Executive Function</p> <p>Poor decision-making, judgment, problem-solving, and organizational skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulty planning the day's activities• Questionable financial decisions• On-the-job mistakes
<p>Other Symptoms</p> <p>Agitation, emotional stability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pacing• Frequent and abrupt mood changes
<p>Lack of insight</p> <p>As noted above, failure to recognize changes in behavior or exhibit awareness of effects of behavior on others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blaming others for consequences of socially unacceptable behavior; e.g., job loss• Anger at limitations on activities

Behavioral variant FTD is commonly misdiagnosed—for example as depression, other psychiatric disorders, Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, or Parkinson's disease. If you have concern that you or a loved one may have been misdiagnosed—or about any of the signs and symptoms listed above—it is important to consult a doctor.

If you're facing this diagnosis—or if you have questions—contact AFTD for help and support.

