Have you noticed changes in your ability to think or remember?

Start a conversation with your family and health care provider.

Support is available — so you can keep living your life.

Dementia Action Collaborative
Washington State

FIND LOCAL RESOURCES
doh.wa.gov/memory

DO YOU NEED HELP FINDING A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER?

Call the Center for MultiCultural Health at (206) 461-6910.

820-NonDOH

ADA STATEMENT: To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email civil.rights@doh.wa.gov.

When it's time to talk about memory loss

EARLY DETECTION HELPS PROTECT OUR HEALTH AND INDEPENDENCE.

Dementia Action Collaborative
Washington State

Early detection often means a better life

As we age, many of us experience some memory loss. Sometimes that's a sign of dementia or other health problems.

For many of us, dementia is a frightening word. When we notice signs of memory loss, we might fear losing independence or worry others will see us as less capable. But with early detection, you have more options for staying healthy and independent. You can:

- Access important resources and programs for people with memory loss and their families.
- Identify and treat reversible causes. Memory loss may be caused by factors such as a medication or a health condition that can be treated.
- Make lifestyle changes or get medications that help manage your symptoms.
- Get support and guidance from organizations that help people and families living with dementia.
- Find out what's going on with you! When you know the cause of your memory loss, you can learn what to expect and how to cope and start building a support network.

Sometimes memory loss is more than 'just aging'

Some changes in your ability to remember or think could be signs of dementia and should be checked out. If you notice any of these signs, don't ignore them.

Memory loss that disrupts daily life. Forgetting new information or dates or events. Repeating questions.

Trouble making or following plans or solving problems. It's harder to work with numbers, follow a recipe or keep track of bills. Difficulty concentrating.

Difficulty with familiar tasks. Trouble driving to a familiar location, making a grocery list or remembering the rules to a game.

Confusion about time or place. Losing track of dates and seasons. Forgetting where you are or how you got there.

Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships. Trouble judging distance or determining color. Vision problems that may cause balance or reading problems.

Problems with words. Trouble following or joining a conversation or naming familiar objects. Stopping mid-conversation and being unable to continue, or repeating yourself.

Losing things without being able to retrace steps to find them. Putting objects in unusual places.

Decreased or poor judgment. Changes in decision-making. Paying less attention to grooming.

Withdrawal from work, hobbies or social activities. Changes in ability to hold a conversation.

Changes in mood and personality. Confusion, suspicion, depression, fear or anxiety. Easily upset at home, with friends, or outside comfort zone.

Source: Alzheimer's Association

What to do if you notice memory loss

Brain health is an important part of overall health, like getting checked for your blood pressure or diabetes. If you or a family member are experiencing memory loss, now is the time to talk about it.

DON'T WAIT.

Early detection makes a big difference.

TALK WITH YOUR FAMILY.

Pick a time when you're not rushed and a setting that's calm and quiet. Listen carefully and with compassion, and work together to agree on your next steps.

MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER.

They should do tests to determine the degree of memory loss and to find the cause. Your provider also should ask a lot of questions. Take a family member or friend along to help answer them based on their observations.

CONNECT WITH COMMUNITY.

Find local resources at doh.wa.gov/memory.

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