

Talking to My Medical Provider About Dementia Concerns

We encourage you to bring this tool to each appointment. Be aware that it might take more than one visit to a medical provider and a series of tests over time to get a diagnosis.

Talking about dementia can be hard and can feel scary. That's typical. There are a number of reasons for memory loss in adults – some of these conditions may be reversible. A first step is to talk with a health care provider about it.

Dementia is *not* a typical part of aging. Typical aging means sometimes forgetting names or appointments or making mistakes when managing your bills, for example. Dementia is different.

If you don't have a medical provider and need one, call the Center for Multicultural Health at (206) 461-6910 or email cmch@cschc.org

THE TEN SIGNS OF DEMENTIA

- ☐ Memory Loss that Disrupts Daily Life
- ☐ Challenges in Planning or Solving Problems
- ☐ Difficulty Completing Familiar Tasks
- ☐ Confusion with Time or Place
- ☐ Trouble Understanding Visual Images and Spatial Relationships
- ☐ New Problems with Words in Speaking or Writing
- ☐ Losing Things Without Being Able to Retrace Steps to Find Them
- ☐ Decreased or Poor Judgment
- ☐ Withdrawal from Work or Social Activities
- ☐ Changes in Mood or Personality

Before Your Visit

- ☐ Write down changes in your health, including any of the signs of dementia you observe or experience from the Ten Signs above.
- ☐ Make a list of any medications, including over-the-counter, prescriptions, and vitamins. Sometimes medications can create dementia symptoms, and your medical provider will want to rule that out.
- ☐ Ask a trusted family member or friend to come with you to help listen and take notes.
- ☐ Make a list of questions to ask your medical provider. *Find some suggested questions in the sidebar on the right.*

Some Helpful Questions

- What can I do to improve my health?
- How can you or the team here help me?
- What medications should I continue to take?
- What medication should I stop taking?
- When should I call you or be seen again?
- What are the next steps I should take? When?

At Your Visit

- ☐ Tell your medical provider about your concerns, using your list of health changes, and use the Ten Signs to help you describe what you are experiencing.
- ☐ Be completely open with your medical provider about your experience; they need to know what is really happening for you.
- ☐ Ask your provider what steps it would take to reach a diagnosis.
- ☐ Ask what you can expect for the future.
- ☐ Tell your medical provider what you need and how you want to be communicated with.
- ☐ Tell your medical provider who will be supporting you and what kind of information is okay to share with them.

What do I want to ask my medical provider?...

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After Each Visit

- ☐ Working towards a diagnosis can create many feelings. That's also typical. Take time to feel those feelings, but don't be afraid of asking for help from your friends, family, or medical provider.
- ☐ Review your notes from your visit.
- ☐ Write down any new questions you have.
- ☐ Write down resources you think you might need.

What do I need to do next?...

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Learn more about dementia and resources available to support you and our community through the link below or using the QR code by pointing your phone camera at the QR code, then touching the prompt on the screen to open the website.

doh.wa.gov/brain-health-resources