

# Lifestyle Changes Can Make a Big Difference

## BRAIN HEALTH & DEMENTIA AWARENESS IN OUR COMMUNITIES

As we age, many of us experience some memory loss. Sometimes that is typical, and sometimes it is a sign of a dementia or other health problems.

Dementia is not a disease itself – it is a set of symptoms caused by a variety of conditions that damage the brain. These changes result in decline in memory and thinking abilities that are severe enough to interfere with daily life.

## CHOOSE TO MAKE CHANGE

One change I will make or action I will take:

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When I will make this change: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Potentially Modifiable Risk Factors

Potentially modifiable” means things in your life you can choose to change. Changes to the way we live our lives can improve our brain health. Some changes will be harder to make than others; **any change in these areas can make a big difference.**

### DEPRESSION

*Low mood/loss of pleasure or interest in activities for long periods of time.*

Find a counselor or support group and talk to your medical provider. Stay involved, even when you don't feel like it. Ask for help participating in enjoyable activities.

### DIABETES

*A disease that occurs when your blood sugar is too high or too low.*

Get tested for diabetes. Limit processed foods and sugars in the home. Keep healthy snacks available and easy to access.

### EXCESS ALCOHOL USE

*Drinking more than the recommended amount of alcohol.*

Limit the number of drinks you consume. Keep less alcohol in the home. Plan social events without alcohol.

### HEARING LOSS

*Having trouble hearing due to a problem in your ears.*

Get your hearing checked regularly. Ask people to speak up if you cannot hear them. Seek out state/community hearing aid resources.

### HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

*The force of your blood pushing against the walls of your blood vessels is too high.*

Get your blood pressure checked regularly. Make healthier food choices at family gatherings. Ask your medical provider about medication.

### PHYSICAL INACTIVITY

*Not moving your body for long periods of time.*

Move your body at least 15 minutes per day. Do chair exercises/chair yoga. Use a walker or cane for safer movement.

### POOR DIET QUALITY

*Not eating healthy foods.*

Talk with your medical provider about your diet. Use single-serving containers for portion control.

### POOR SLEEP QUALITY AND SLEEP DISORDERS

*You are having a lot of trouble sleeping.*

Consult a sleep professional. Set and keep a bedtime routine. Remove distractions from the sleeping area.

### TOBACCO USE

*Smoking cigarettes, cigars, pipes or using tobacco products.*

Find a stop-smoking program that could work for you. Talk with your medical provider about options. Ask for help limiting tobacco use.

### TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

*Traumatic brain injury can happen when you get hit hard on the head.*

Plan your space to avoid trip and fall hazards. Place regularly used items on low shelves. Wear your seat belt and/or helmet.



### FIND RESOURCES

*With early detection, you have more options for staying healthy, maintaining independence, and getting support.*

[www.doh.wa.gov/brain-health-resources](http://www.doh.wa.gov/brain-health-resources)

[www.doh.wa.gov/memory](http://www.doh.wa.gov/memory)

[www.memorylossinfoa.org](http://www.memorylossinfoa.org)