

# 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 ext. 206 or email [cmch@cschc.org](mailto: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?

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## 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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