*Newsletter Article:*

With early detection, you have options for   
living with memory loss

As we age, many of us experience some memory loss. Forgetting things once in a while is a normal part of aging. But memory loss that disrupts daily life could be a sign of something more serious, like dementia or other health problems.

To know whether your memory loss is a sign of a bigger issue, it’s important to talk with your family and get checked out by your health care provider. If you are experiencing signs of dementia, early detection gives you more choices for staying healthy and independent.

Dementia is not one specific disease. It’s a broad term for an impaired ability to remember, think or make decisions. For many of us, it’s a frightening word. But identifying your symptoms and potential causes can make a big difference in your life and in your family’s life over time.

When memory loss is detected early, you can:

* Access important resources and programs for people with memory loss and their families.
* Identify and treat reversible causes of memory loss. Rather than being a sign of dementia, some people’s memory loss is caused by factors such as a medication or a health condition that can be treated.
* Make lifestyle changes or get medications that help manage symptoms.
* Get support and guidance from organizations that help people and families living with dementia.
* Find out what’s going on! When we know the cause of our memory loss, we can learn what to expect and how to cope. We can start building a support network.

You can visit doh.wa.gov/memory to learn about some differences between normal aging and signs that your memory loss or changes in thinking may be related to dementia.

But the bottom line is: If you’re having trouble remembering or thinking normally, talk about it now with your family. Make an appointment to visit your health care provider. Together, you can make a plan to get care and support for your family.