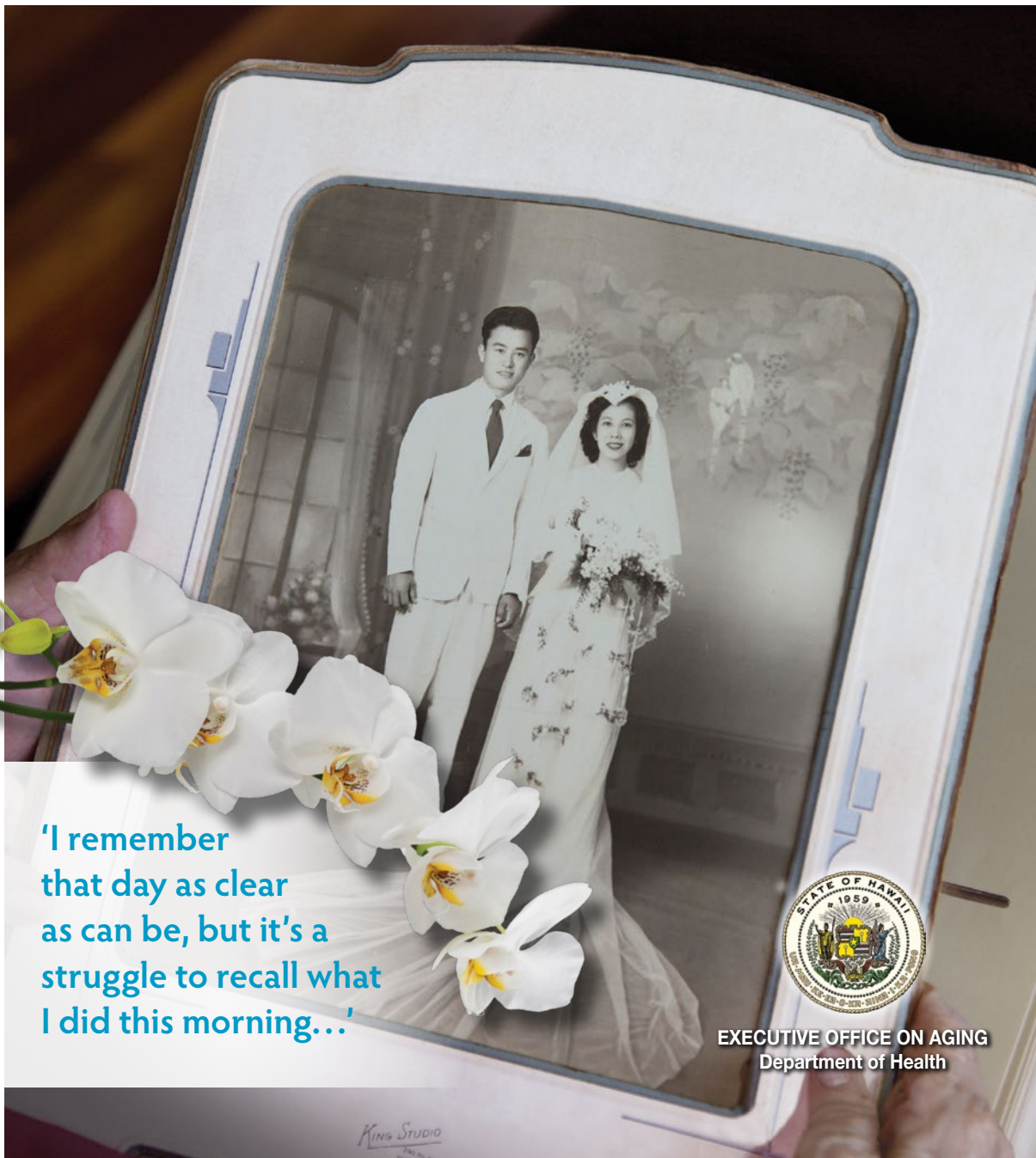


Worried About Your Memory?



'I remember
that day as clear
as can be, but it's a
struggle to recall what
I did this morning...'



EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING
Department of Health



This booklet is for people who are worried about their memory, or the memory of someone close to them. It will help you understand why people may develop memory problems and the importance of speaking to your primary care physician or doctor about any concerns.

What causes memory problems?

Memory problems are common. Many of us notice that our memory becomes less reliable as we get older. Stress, depression, and certain physical illnesses are just a few of the things that can make memory worse, even in younger people. And of course, some of us are more forgetful than others. But sometimes memory loss could be an early sign of dementia.

What is dementia?

Dementia is a general term for a decline in mental ability severe enough to interfere with daily life. Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia.

Dementia is not a specific disease. It's an overall term that describes a group of symptoms associated with a decline in memory or other thinking skills severe enough to reduce a person's ability to perform everyday activities. **Alzheimer's disease** accounts for 60 to 80 percent of cases. **Vascular dementia**, which occurs after a stroke, is the second most common dementia type.

Normal aging vs. serious memory problems

It happens to all of us from time to time. You can't put a name to a face. You forget where you put your keys. You can't remember where you parked
(Continued on page 2)

Normal aging vs. serious memory problems like Alzheimer's

Normal Aging

Making a bad decision once in a while

Missing a monthly payment

Forgetting which day it is but remembering later

Sometimes forgetting which word to use

Misplacing things from time to time and retracing steps to find them

Serious memory problem

Making poor judgments and decisions a lot of the time

Problems taking care of monthly bills

Losing track of the date or time of the year

Trouble having a conversation

Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps

the car. Most of the time, such slips are just normal aging rather than a sign of something more serious. But if you are worried that your memory or the memory of someone close to you is getting noticeably worse, or if memory loss is beginning to affect your everyday life, it is worth seeking advice.

What causes dementia?

Dementia is caused by a number of different diseases of the brain (see page 3), the most common being Alzheimer's disease. Other forms of dementia include vascular dementia (caused by strokes); Lewy body dementia (due to microscopic protein deposits called Lewy bodies that damage brain cells); and Fronto-temporal dementia (due to progressive degeneration of the frontal and temporal lobes in the brain).

Signs you should look for

You should seek medical advice without delay if you or a loved one's memory loss affects daily life, especially if you notice:¹

1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life
2. Challenges in planning or solving problems
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work, or at leisure
4. Confusion with time or place
5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships
6. New problems with words when speaking or writing

7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps
8. Decreased or poor judgment
9. Withdrawal from work or social activities.
10. Changes in mood or personality.

¹For more information about the Alzheimer's Association's "10 Early Signs and Symptoms of Alzheimer's" visit www.alz.org/10signs.

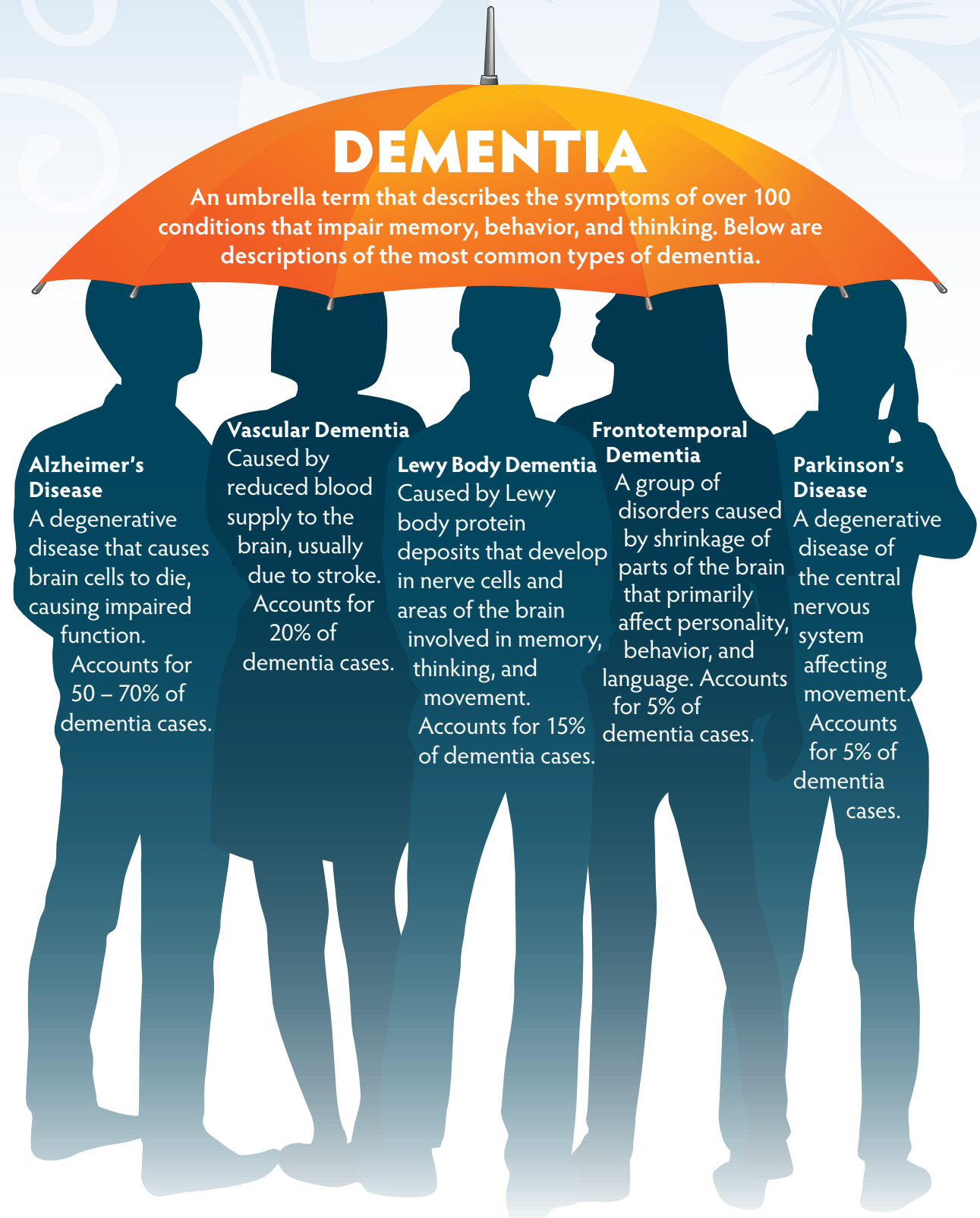
What should I do if I'm worried about my memory?

If you are worried about your memory, talk to your doctor or healthcare professional who will listen to your concerns and possibly arrange for further tests. You may be referred to a specialist such as a geriatrician, neurologist, or psychiatrist to get an accurate diagnosis.

If you are concerned about the memory of someone close to you, encourage them to visit their doctor. You might start the conversation by gently asking the person if they've been feeling any different from usual or are struggling with anything.

It's important to know that there are many reasons for memory loss apart from dementia. These can include treatable conditions like depression, infections, reactions from medication,

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and vitamin or thyroid deficiencies. The earlier you seek help the better, as there may be support or treatment available that can help.

Why is a timely and accurate diagnosis important?

Regardless of your health status, it is important to have conversations with your family and doctor about the possibility of memory loss. This means advance care planning, like having an advance directive and making important care choices ahead of time. This way, if something should occur to cause you to not be able to make decisions, your wishes and choices will be respected. Communication is key. Your healthcare provider can help.

The following are some of the benefits of seeing your doctor early:

- Diagnosis provides an accurate determination of what may be causing an individual's cognitive decline.
- Individuals who receive a diagnosis of mild cognitive impairment (MCI) due to Alzheimer's can begin health measures to preserve their existing cognitive function for as long as possible. These include control of blood pressure and diabetes, smoking cessation, aerobic exercise, mental activity, and social engagement.
- An early diagnosis of Alzheimer's maximizes the chances of participation in a clinical trial.

- Early diagnosis gives the individual time to assemble medical and caregiving teams to provide support.
- Early diagnosis enables potential safety issues to be addressed, such as driving.
- Early diagnosis offers emotional and social benefits, such as reducing anxiety and providing a sense of relief as symptoms are finally given a name.
- Early diagnosis gives individuals time to plan for the future while they are cognitively able to make decisions and understand available choices. Planning includes legal, financial, and end-of-life decisions.

Alzheimer's Association Special Report: Benefits of Early Diagnosis, 2018 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures Report, Spring/Summer 2018.

What resources are available?

Alzheimer's Association, Aloha Chapter

The Alzheimer's Association provides information, care, and support to people with any form of dementia and their caregivers.

Services offered at no cost:

- 24/7 Helpline staffed by dementia care experts offering information and support. Translation services in more than 170 languages. Call 1-800-272-3900 (TDD: 1-866-403-3073)

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- Local information and referral, including multilingual information and resources
- Supportive counseling for individuals and families
- Education for caregivers, the community, and professionals
- Caregiver support groups
- Safety programs, such as MedicAlert® + Alzheimer's Association Safe Return®
- TrialMatch,® a clinical studies matching service
- Suite of e-services, including online training and dementia certification

Phone: (800) 272-3900

Web: www.alz.org/hawaii

Public Health Nurses (PHN)

PHN are Registered Nurses (RN) found in every community across the state. Through case management services, PHNs help older persons manage their care to remain safely in their home for as long as possible.

- Memory Care Navigators are trained professionals who help conduct memory assessments and connect persons living with dementia and their caregivers to resources

Contact the PHN section in your area:

O'AHU

East Honolulu: (808) 733-9220

West Honolulu: (808) 832-5757

Central O'ahu: (808) 453-6190

Leeward O'ahu: (808) 675-0080

Windward O'ahu: (808) 233-5450

NEIGHBOR ISLANDS

Kaua'i: (808) 241-3387

Maui: (808) 984-8260

Moloka'i: (808) 553-7880

Lana'i: (808) 565-7114

East Hawai'i Island: (808) 974-6025

West Hawai'i Island: (808) 322-1500

Hawai'i Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)

An ADRC is a single point of entry in each county where persons of all ages, incomes, and disabilities may receive information, assistance, and referrals on a full range of person-centered, long-term care services and supports.

Phone: (808) 643-ADRC

Web: www.hawaiiadrc.org

Elderly Affairs Division (O'ahu):

Phone: (808) 768-7700

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Hawai'i County Office of Aging (HCOA)
Phone: (808) 961-8600

Kaua'i Agency on Elderly Affairs (KAEA)
Phone: (808) 241-4470

Maui County Office on Aging (MCOA)
Phone: (808) 270-7774

Hawai'i Alzheimer's Disease Initiative (HADI), UH Center on Aging

The Hawai'i Alzheimers Disease Initiative is a project that is building the capacity of professionals and organizations to support older adults with memory loss or dementia and their caregivers.

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- Savvy Caregiver Program workshops are six-week educational and skill-building programs for caregivers of persons living with memory loss
- Positive Approach to Care™ (Teepa Snow approach)

Phone: (808) 956-5001

Web: www.hawaii.edu/aging/hadi

Mediation Center of the Pacific – Kupuna Pono Program

Family counseling and mediation services involving caregiving and elder issues, including dementia. (O'ahu only)

Phone: (808) 521-6767

Web: www.mediatehawaii.org/kupuna-pono/

Kokua Mau: A Movement to Improve Care

Statewide information on hospices, pain and palliative care, and advance care planning education and forms (advance directives and POLST)

Phone: (808) 585-9977

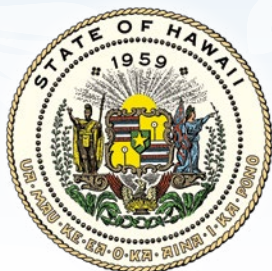
Web: www.kokuamau.org

Other useful links and national resources

- National website: www.alzheimers.gov
- Alzheimer's Disease International: www.alz.co.uk
- National Alzheimer's and Dementia Resource Center: <http://nadrc.acl.gov>
- Alzheimer's Association Facts & Figures: www.alz.org/alzheimers_disease_facts_and_figures.asp
- Living Well: A Guide for Persons with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) & Early Dementia: <https://www.actonalz.org/pdf/Living-Well.pdf>
- Brain Health as You Age: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/brain-health-resource>
- National Institute on Aging: Alzheimer's Disease & Related Dementias: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/alzheimers>
- Dementia Friends USA: <https://dementiafriendsusa.org>
- ACT on Alzheimer's (Minnesota): <http://www.actonalz.org>
- Pomai and Her Papa- A children's book on growing up with memory Loss: <http://manoa.hawaii.edu/hakupuna/pomai-and-her-papa/>



**If you are worried, call your doctor.
The earlier you seek help, the sooner you can get
information, advice, and support.**



EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING **Department of Health**

Nondiscrimination in Services: We provide access to our activities without regard to race, color, national origin, language, age, sex (including gender identity or expression), sexual orientation, religion, or disability. Contact the Executive Office on Aging at 250 South Hotel Street, Suite 406, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813, or at (808) 586-0100; or contact our Affirmative Action Office at P.O. Box 3378, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96801 or at (808) 586-4614 within 180 days of a problem.

This publication contains information and general advice. It should not be used as a substitute for personalized advice from a qualified professional. The Alzheimer's Association and Hawai'i Executive Office on Aging, Hawai'i Department of Health, does not accept any liability arising from its use. We strive to ensure that the content is accurate and up-to-date, but information can change over time.

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