



**Audio Transcript**  
**Introduction to Memory Problems Video**  
**KP South San Francisco Medical Center • Neurology Department**  
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Welcome to the Information About Memory Problems video.

Hello. This is Dr. Craig Hou. I am a Neurologist at the Kaiser Permanente Medical Center in South San Francisco. You may be meeting me or one of my physician colleagues at your appointment. Thank you for watching this video.

In this video you will learn about the causes of memory problems, the symptoms of dementia, and what the differences are between dementia and Alzheimer's disease. The evaluation of memory problems will be discussed briefly. You will learn more about the evaluation process in the next video. Finally, the treatments for Alzheimer's disease will be covered.

There are many different possible causes of memory problems. Memory problems do not automatically mean someone has Alzheimer's disease or dementia. Some lapses in memory may actually be normal and related to age. However, memory problems that affect daily life and activities may not be normal.

Here are some examples of normal age-related changes in memory: forgets facts or names and then remembers them later; or occasionally misplaces items; or sometimes forgets the right word to say; or has a "tip of the tongue" moment.

*Dementia* is memory problems that affect daily life or activities. It can include problems in other areas of thinking such as speech and language, judgment and problem solving, and spatial and visual skills. Changes in personality and behavior can happen in dementia as well.

As was mentioned earlier, dementia is memory and thinking problems that are serious enough to affect daily life and activities. It will get worse over time. There is no cure. And dementia is not just a part of getting old. There are many causes of dementia. Alzheimer's disease and strokes are common causes of memory problems. Problems with memory and thinking can come from many other reasons. These include other neurological conditions, hormone or electrolyte disturbances, medications (both prescription and over-the-counter), vitamin deficiencies, alcohol use or depression. Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia. About two thirds of dementia cases are from Alzheimer's disease. Other causes include strokes or mini-strokes, or other neurological diseases.



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Alzheimer's disease is a disease of the brain where abnormal proteins build up inside the brain. This causes brain cells to slowly die, which in turn causes parts of the brain to stop working. The symptoms of Alzheimer's disease usually start after the age of 60. The most important risk factor for developing Alzheimer's disease is older age. Memory problems are often the earliest and most noticeable change. Other thinking skills become affected as the disease progresses.

There are some people who have memory problems that occur regularly. However, other thinking skills are still normal and the memory problems do not affect daily life or activities. In these cases, the diagnosis would be mild cognitive impairment. Because the memory problems do not affect daily life or activities, these individuals would not meet the definition of dementia. The memory problems might worsen over time. If it begins to affect daily life, the diagnosis becomes Alzheimer's disease or another cause of dementia. Currently there are no approved medications for mild cognitive impairment.

There is no blood test or brain scan that makes the diagnosis of dementia. The diagnosis of dementia is based on a clinical evaluation. Identifiable and possible causes are looked for and excluded if not found. If no clear cause is found, the most likely cause is Alzheimer's disease.

The evaluation process may include an interview with the patient, family member, caregiver or a person who knows the patient well. A neurological examination may occur. Blood tests or a brain scan might be ordered. In some cases, these tests will not be required in order to make a diagnosis. If your doctor has ordered any blood tests, please do them at least a few days before the appointment.

There are no cures for Alzheimer's disease. The problems and symptoms will get worse over time. The medications for Alzheimer's disease only work in about one third of people who take them. Any benefit or effect of the medication last a short time, usually just a few months.

On behalf of the staff at Kaiser Permanente medical center in South San Francisco, thank you for watching this video. The next video is "Clinic Appointment for Memory Evaluation".

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