Difficulties in Thinking or Memory in Montana

ABOUT DIFFICULTIES IN THINKING OR MEMORY

Dementia is a general term for conditions, like Alzheimer's, that makes someone unable to remember, think clearly, or make decisions while doing everyday activities.[1] Although dementia usually affects older adults, it is not a normal part of aging.[1]

Difficulty with thinking or memory that is getting worse is also called "cognitive decline." Although not everyone with these symptoms gets *dementia*, cognitive decline is an early symptom.[2]

WHAT MONTANA DATA SHOW

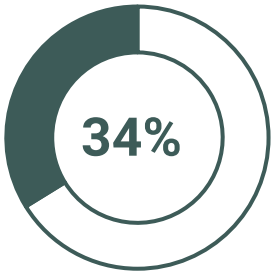
1 in 5 (20%) Montanans 45 years and older report difficulties in thinking or memory that are getting worse.



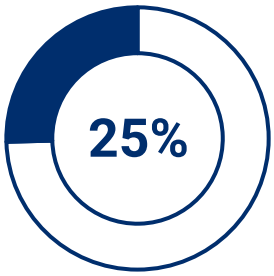
Although most people reporting difficulties in thinking or memory have a primary care provider (92%), ***less than half (45%) have talked to a health care provider about it***.

These difficulties in thinking or memory impact life.

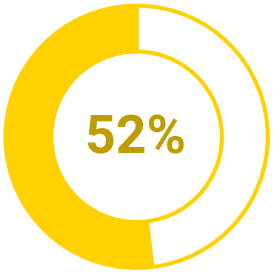
Percent reporting impact to daily activities*



Percent reporting impact to work or volunteering



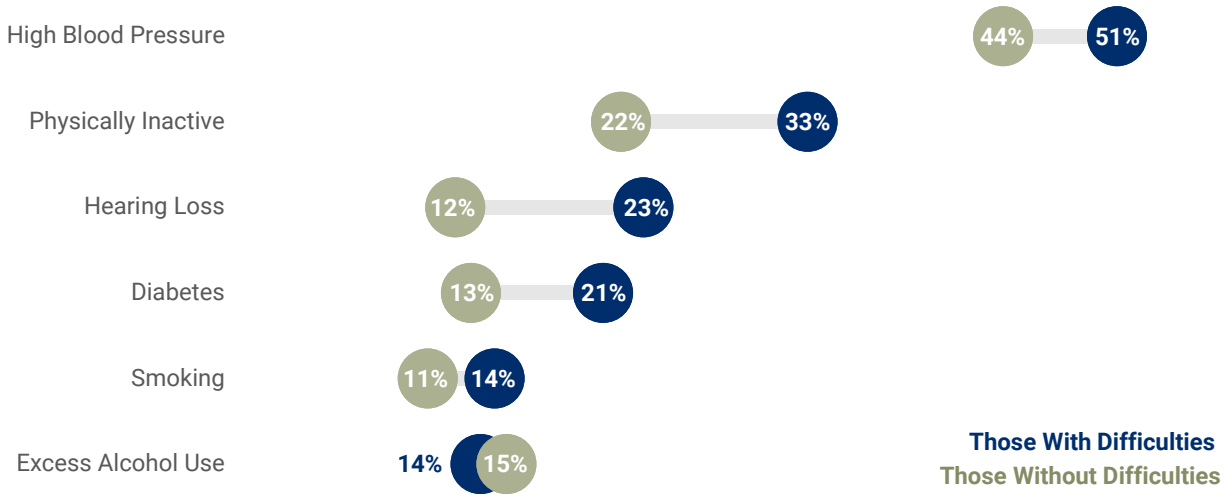
Percent reporting worry about the difficulties



*Such as, managing medications, paying bills, or keeping track of appointments.

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Those with difficulties in thinking or memory more often report 5 out of 6 risk factors than those without difficulties.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

It is recommended that people **talk to their health care provider** – the sooner dementia is diagnosed the sooner treatment can begin.[1]

Ways to reduce risk[3]:

- Stay physically active
- Prevent or manage diabetes
- Manage blood pressure
- Prevent or correct hearing loss
- Limit or avoid alcohol use and smoking

Montana Alzheimer's and Dementia Program
(406) 444-4292
https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/Alzheimers/AlzheimersandDementiaProgram

ABOUT THE DATA

Data in this report are from the 2023 Montana Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). Questions about cognitive decline were only asked of survey participants 45 years and older. For information about BRFSS – please see the following websites:

- https://www.cdc.gov/brfss/index.html
- https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/brfss/

REFERENCES

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2024). *About Dementia*. https://www.cdc.gov/alzheimers-dementia/about/index.html.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2024). *Cognitive Health and Caregiving*. https://www.cdc.gov/cdi/indicator-definitions/cognitive-health-caregiving.html.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2024). *Reducing the Risk for Dementia*. https://www.cdc.gov/alzheimers-dementia/prevention/index.html.