

# TALKING TO A

# LOVED ONE ABOUT THEIR MEMORY LOSS

When you notice changes in your loved one's memory, thinking, or behavior, it can be hard to know what to do. You may not know how to talk about it or where to even start. Well, you're not alone, and it's natural to be nervous. We're here to help with some tips for how to have this important conversation and how you can continue to support the person you love. For more information about symptoms and resources, visit [ItsTimeWeKnow.com](https://www.ItsTimeWeKnow.com).

## How to start the conversation

### Step 1: Plan your talk



**Think about what you want to say ahead of time and how you want to say it. Decide on the best place to have the conversation—it should be somewhere that your loved one feels relaxed and open.**

**Empathy is key.** Put yourself in their shoes, and think about how you would feel if someone brought this up to you. Watch your body language. You want to look and act supportive, and not come across harshly. You don't want it to seem like an intervention.

### Questions to consider asking:

"I've noticed some changes in you recently. How are you feeling?"

"I've noticed that you have been forgetting things lately. Have you noticed that, too? Is it worrying you?"

"It seems like you are struggling to find the right words sometimes. Is that happening often?"

## Step 2: Offer to go with them to the doctor



Ask if they will see a doctor, and show your support by offering to go to the appointment with them if you can. Some words of encouragement may include:

- “Talking to a doctor might help us find out what’s causing this. Let’s set up an appointment together.”
- “Once we know what’s causing this, we can work with the doctor to find the best path forward.”
- “I think we’ll both feel more assured once we’ve spoken with a doctor.”

## Step 3: If it doesn’t go as planned



If the conversation starts to feel uncomfortable or upsetting, remain calm. Reassure your loved one. Some ways of responding may include:

- “This could be normal aging, but it could also be something more serious. I think we should talk to a doctor so that we can be sure.”
- “I understand you’re hesitant, but I think it’s worth having it looked at. It would be reassuring for both of us to have an opinion from the doctor.”
- “That’s true, but sometimes memory loss can get worse over time. So, I think it’s better to get a doctor’s opinion.”
- “I know you’re concerned about a diagnosis—so am I. We can ask your doctor about management options and tackle this together. Whatever the outcome is, I’ll be there for you.”

If your loved one still doesn’t want to talk, try again another time. And take note of your first conversation to plan for the next one.

Date and time	Where were you?	What worked well?	What can be done differently?

Questions about mild cognitive impairment (MCI) and Alzheimer’s?  
Call the Alzheimer’s Learning Line, offered by Biogen.  
Remember, your doctor is always your best source of information.

833-LRN-LINE (833-576-5463)  
Learn more at [ItsTimeWeKnow.com](http://ItsTimeWeKnow.com)