



## ASK THE SOCIAL WORKER

**Question:** My father is a 73-year-old retired theatre manager. He was just informed by his doctor that he is showing signs of early multi-infarct dementia. I know this means he has some memory problems, but is there any thing he can do to get better? How can I help my father?

**Answer:** Although this news may be frightening, the early diagnosis of multi-infarct dementia makes it possible for your father to learn how to identify and manage conditions that may contribute to its progression. Multi-infarct dementia, also known as vascular dementia, is the second most common cause of dementia in older adults. It occurs when brain cells are damaged by either a series of small strokes that interrupt the flow of blood to the brain or when a blood vessel bursts, spilling blood into the brain. The portion of the brain that is injured and the amount of tissue damaged will determine the extent of the dementia.

Doctors often diagnose dementia when at least two brain functions, such as language, memory, perception, emotional behavior or cognitive skills are impaired. I recommend you seek your father's permission to attend his next doctor's visit. Let him know you care about his health and you want to know more about the physical and neurological examinations, including the brain MRI or CT, which showed the signs of multi-infarct dementia. Explain you want to know the extent of his forgetfulness, how

it may affect his activities and what aid is available.

While there is no cure for multi-infarct dementia at this time, the best treatment is to prevent further strokes. Controlling blood pressure, cholesterol, heart disease and diabetes will reduce the risk of strokes. Encourage your father to learn how he can reduce his risk of strokes. Provide the support he may need to keep regular check-ups with his doctor, to follow his doctor's recommendations, and to maintain a daily routine that includes regular social and physical activities. Suggest he execute an advance health care directive, a durable power of attorney for finances and other legal documents that will make his wishes known. Learn how he can use alarm clocks, calendars and lists to make his day easier.

A free packet of information regarding multi-infarct dementia and family support groups can be obtained from the Alzheimer's Association at (800) 272-3900 or [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org).

*Sources: National Institute on Aging, [www.nia.nih.gov](http://www.nia.nih.gov); National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, [www.ninds.nih.gov](http://www.ninds.nih.gov); Mental Health America, [www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org).*

## JOKE OF THE MONTH

**A word to the wise ain't necessary.  
It's the stupid ones who need the advice.**

— *Bill Cosby, [www.basicjokes.com](http://www.basicjokes.com)*

Laughter is known to boost the immune system, lower blood pressure, burn calories and release pleasure-inducing chemicals in the brain.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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## WHAT IS YOUR DENTAL IQ?



### True or False?

1. Gum disease is the only dental disease you can prevent.
2. Plaque causes gum disease not cavities.
3. Tartar can be removed by brushing with an AMA approved toothpaste.
4. The AMA recommends you replace your toothbrush every six months.
5. Tooth pain is a sign of gingivitis.
6. Red, soft, shiny or swollen gums are symptoms of periodontitis.
7. It is best to use a 12 inch length of dental floss when flossing teeth.

Answers: Each statement is false.

If you answered “yes” to any of the statements, our “Healthy Teeth and Gums” brochure may help you improve your Dental IQ. Call the MPPAF’s social service department at (888) 994-3863, ext. 2370, to request a free brochure.

## NEW ADDITIONS TO THE MPPAF’S NATIONAL RESOURCE DIRECTORY

### **State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP): [www.shiptalk.org](http://www.shiptalk.org)**

This national program, funded through federal grants, provides one-on-one counseling to Medicare recipients. Local SHIP counselors can be located through the Web site.

### **Benefits Check Up: [www.benefitscheckup.org](http://www.benefitscheckup.org)**

This free comprehensive Web-based service is offered by the National Council on Aging. Low income seniors may check eligibility for public and private benefits at the Web site.

### **Veterans A&A Benefit: [www.veteransaidbenefit.org](http://www.veteransaidbenefit.org)**

This Web site is sponsored by the National Care Planning Council to inform the public about the valuable Veterans Aid and Attendance Pension benefit available to veterans over age 65.



### QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“That’s all there is to  
success is satisfaction.”

— Will Rogers

### QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

Call Karen Wiener, Manager of Social  
Services at (888) 994-3863, ext. 2390,  
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