

MEMORY IN AGING: MEMORY WELLNESS AND WHEN TO WORRY

Normal aging

Some forgetfulness is expected as we age. Aging changes the brain and therefore your memory abilities change as well. This is normal (providing there are no underlying medical conditions) and is referred to as “age-related” memory change. It may take longer to learn new things, remember certain words, or find your glasses. These changes are often signs of mild forgetfulness, not serious memory problems.

There are several factors that may improve your memory:

- stay physically fit (exercise) and get lots of rest
- mental activities (reading, crossword puzzles, educational experiences)
- social activity; spend time with your friends and family
- healthy diet (lower fat and cholesterol)
- volunteer in your community, at a school, or at your place of worship.

When Memory Loss May be Serious

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Has your memory loss ever scared you?
2. Are people that care about you expressing concern? Are they subtly trying to take over tasks for you like errands or paying bills?
3. Do you struggle to make simple decisions about everyday things?
4. Has your memory caused everyday life to be difficult?

(Contents adapted from the National Institute on Aging (NIA) and BeBrainFit websites)

Memory changes as you get older can seem worrisome, at times, but are often only signs of inattention and normal aging. Better understanding how your memory works can help you to determine if you are one of the “worried well” or if you should consult your doctor about your memory. I have over 15 years of experience in evaluating memory and cognition, teaching memory wellness, and supporting caregivers of dementia patients.

For more information or to make an appointment, contact:

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