

Normal Aging and Memory

Has the name of someone you should know escaped you?

Have you spent time searching for your keys, wallet, eyeglasses or something else important?



In truth, such “slips of the mind” are normal. For most of us, subtle challenges with remembering begin showing up in early adulthood and continue into old age.

Older adults may notice it takes longer to learn new things, they misplace things from time to time, and they don’t remember names, dates and information as well as they once did.

These are signs of mild forgetfulness and not usually serious memory problems. It can be reassuring to know this and then take steps to maintain or improve your memory and thinking.

“My doctor told me that like the rest of my body, my brain needs routine care and stimulation. I just turned 69 and I take that advice seriously.”





Ways to Keep Your Brain and Memory Healthy

Engage in physical activity

Exercise or just moving more may be the most important thing you can do to improve overall health, including brain health.

Eat smart

A brain-healthy diet is one rich in fruits, vegetables, antioxidants and omega-3 fatty acids.

Have good sleep habits

Keep a regular sleep schedule that includes 7-8 hours a night.

Use memory aids

Make “to do” lists, take notes, and use calendars.

Stay organized

Keep things you regularly use in the same place—keys on a hook by the door, your wallet in a basket on your dresser.

Develop new interests or hobbies

Learning new things or pursuing activities that are a bit challenging may help preserve mental functions.

Stay socially engaged

Daily contact with family, friends and community groups can support mental sharpness.

Pay attention

Focusing on a name, upcoming event, or new piece of information will strengthen your memory of it later.

Manage stress

Excess stress takes a toll on the brain. Consider learning about the practice of mindfulness as a powerful stress reducer.

Mindfulness is about paying attention, on purpose, to the present moment. This includes observing your thoughts and feelings without judgment. With practice, mindfulness can have a positive effect on the brain and overall wellbeing. Many books, videos and audio recordings are available on mindfulness techniques.

