

RECOGNIZING EARLY SIGNS OF MEMORY LOSS

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EXPERT CARE FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY

- As we grow older, we experience physiological changes that can cause glitches in brain functions we've always taken for granted.
 - Therefore, it takes longer to learn and recall information. We're not as quick as we used to be.
 - In fact, we often mistake this slowing of our mental processes for true memory loss. But in most cases, if we give ourselves time, the information will come to mind.
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- The brain is capable of producing new brain cells at any age, so significant memory loss is *not* an inevitable result of aging.
 - But just as it is with muscle strength, you have to use it or lose it.
 - Your lifestyle, habits, and daily activities have a huge impact on the health of your brain. Whatever your age, there are many ways you can improve your cognitive skills, prevent memory loss, and protect your grey matter.
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There are mental activities that are not affected by the normal aging:

- Your ability to do the things you've always done and continue to do often
- The wisdom and knowledge you've acquired from life experience
- Your innate common sense and your ability to form reasonable arguments and judgments



3 Causes Of Age-related Memory Loss

- The hippocampus, a region of the brain involved in the formation and retrieval of memories, often deteriorates with age.
- Hormones and proteins that protect and repair brain cells and stimulate neural growth also decline with age.
- Older people often experience decreased blood flow to the brain, which can impair memory and lead to changes in cognitive skills.

- The primary difference between age-related memory loss and dementia is that the former isn't disabling.
- The memory lapses have little impact on your daily performance and ability to do what you want to do.
- Dementia, on the other hand, is marked by a persistent, disabling decline in two or more intellectual abilities such as memory, language, judgment, and abstract thinking.
- When memory loss becomes so pervasive and severe that it disrupts your work, hobbies, social activities, and family relationships, you may be experiencing the warning signs of Alzheimer's disease, or another disorder that causes dementia, or a condition that mimics dementia.

Normal Age-related Memory Changes

- Able to function independently dressing and pursue normal activities despite occasional memory lapses
- Able to recall and describe incidents of forgetfulness
- May pause to remember directions, doesn't get lost in familiar places
- Occasional difficulty finding the right word trouble holding a conversation
- Judgment and decision-making ability the same as always

Symptoms That May Indicate Dementia

Difficulty performing simple tasks (paying bills, appropriately, washing up); forgetting how to do things you've done many times

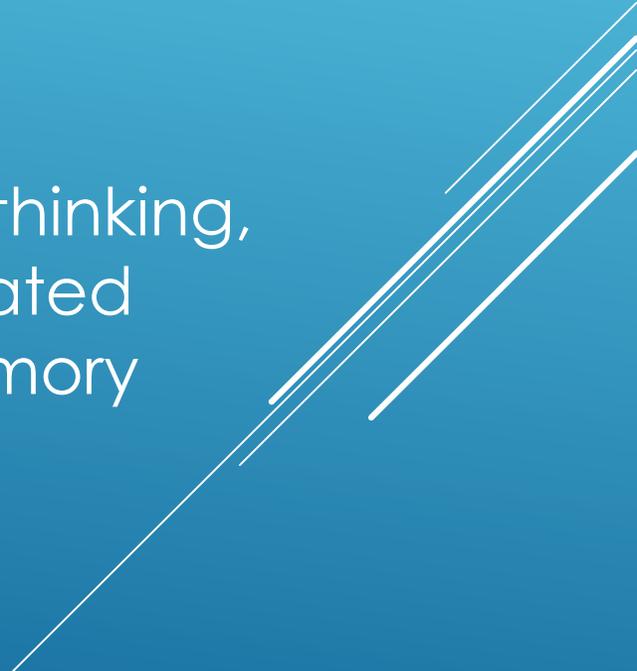
Unable to recall or describe specific instances where memory loss caused problems

Gets lost or disoriented even in familiar places; but unable to follow directions

Words are frequently forgotten, misused, or but no garbled; Repeats phrases and stories in same conversation

Trouble making choices; May show poor judgment or behave in socially inappropriate way

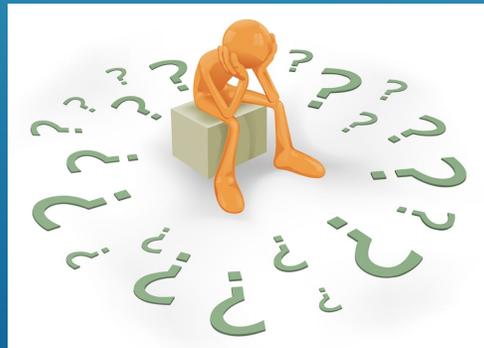
Symptoms of mild cognitive impairment (MCI)

- Mild cognitive impairment (MCI) is an intermediate stage between normal age-related cognitive changes and the more serious symptoms that indicate dementia.
 - MCI can involve problems with memory, language, thinking, and judgment that are greater than normal age-related changes, but the line between MCI and normal memory problems is not always a clear one.
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- The difference is often one of degrees. For example, it's normal as you age to have some problems remembering the names of people.
 - However, it's not normal to forget the names of your close family and friends and then still be unable to recall them after a period of time.
 - If you have mild cognitive impairment, you and your family or close friends will likely be aware of the decline in your memory or mental function. But, unlike people with full-blown dementia, you are still able to function in your daily life without relying on others.
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Symptoms of MCI include:

- Frequently losing or misplacing things
- Frequently forgetting conversations, appointments, or events
- Difficulty remembering the names of new acquaintances
- Difficulty following the flow of a conversation



When To See A Doctor For Memory Loss

- It's time to consult a doctor when memory lapses become frequent enough or sufficiently noticeable to concern you or a family member.
 - Even if you're not displaying all the necessary symptoms to indicate dementia, now may be a good time to take steps to prevent a small problem becoming a larger one.
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- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, located in the lower right quadrant of the slide.

- Your doctor can assess your personal risk factors, evaluate your symptoms, eliminate reversible causes of memory loss, and help you obtain appropriate care.
- Early diagnosis can treat reversible causes of memory loss, lessen decline in vascular dementia, or improve the quality of life in Alzheimer's or other types of dementia.



The same practices that contribute to healthy aging and physical vitality also contribute to a healthy memory

- **Stay social.** People who aren't socially engaged with family and friends are at higher risk for memory problems than people who have strong social ties. Quality face-to-face social interaction can greatly reduce stress and is powerful medicine for the brain.
- **Stop smoking.** Smoking heightens the risk of vascular disorders that can cause stroke and constrict arteries that deliver oxygen to the brain. When you quit smoking, the brain quickly benefits from improved circulation.

- **Manage stress.** Cortisol, the stress hormone, damages the brain over time and can lead to memory problems. But even before that happens, stress or anxiety can cause memory difficulties in the moment. When you're stressed out or anxious, you're more likely to suffer memory lapses and have trouble learning or concentrating. But simple stress management techniques can minimize these harmful effects.
- **Get enough sleep.** Getting a good night's sleep as you age is necessary for memory consolidation, the process of forming and storing new memories so you can retrieve them later. Sleep deprivation reduces the growth of new neurons in the hippocampus and causes problems with memory, concentration, and decision-making.

Watch what you eat. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables and drink green tea as these foods contain antioxidants in abundance, which can keep your brain cells from “rusting.” Foods rich in omega-3 fats (such as salmon, tuna, trout, walnuts, and flaxseed) are particularly good for your brain and memory.



Exercise regularly. Starting a regular exercise routine, including cardio and strength training, may reduce your risk of developing dementia by up to 50 percent. What's more, exercise can also slow further deterioration in those who have already started to develop cognitive problems. Exercise protects against Alzheimer's by stimulating the brain's ability to maintain old connections as well as make new ones.



Brain Exercises To Combat Memory Loss

- Play games you are not already familiar with that involve strategy, like chess or bridge, and word games like Scrabble. Try crossword and other word puzzles, or number puzzles such as Sudoku.
 - Improve how well you do existing activities. If you already speak a foreign language, commit to improving your fluency. Or if you're a keen golfer, aim to lower your handicap.
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- Get in the habit of learning new things: games, recipes, driving routes, a musical instrument, a foreign language. Take a course in an unfamiliar subject that interests you. The more interested and engaged your brain, the more likely you'll be to continue learning and the greater the benefits you'll experience.
- Read newspapers, magazines, and books that challenge you.



Come to WINDS Café at Club Sequoia!

Are **you or a loved one** experiencing any of these **early signs** of **Memory Loss?**



- Memory loss that disrupts daily life
- Challenges in planning or solving problems
- Difficulty completing familiar tasks
- Confusion with time or place
- Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships
- New problems with words in speaking or writing
- Withdrawal from work or social activities
- Changes in mood and personality

JFS Clifton is excited to announce a new Early Memory Loss Day Program

WINDS Café at Club SEQUOIA

**Meets every Tuesday
12 PM - 4 PM**

110 Main Avenue, Passaic

Join others who share your experience! Enjoy creative opportunities to stimulate your mind and memory.

Hot Kosher lunch, exercise, music, arts, discussion and other recreational activities.

\$20/day

No one is turned away because of inability to pay.

Support Group for Care Partners available.

FOR MORE INFO, PLEASE CONTACT **REBECCA SCHOCHET** AT 973-777-7638 x627 OR R.SCHOCHET@JFSCLIFFTON.ORG

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