



## MEMORY AND AGING

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### Memory and Aging



#### Learning new things

Learning new things may become more difficult – but not impossible.

- *You will need more time to learn.*

#### Retrieving memories

Lapses of memory may increase.

- *We all experience lapses – at all ages! Expect to have them more often.*

#### Some memory systems decline:

Remembering details of events past *or* information for future events

- *Write information on a calendar.*

Holding memories so that you can solve a problem, make a decision, or perform a task

- *Use aids and strategies. (see [Ways to Reduce and Manage Memory Loss](#))*

#### Some memory systems do not decline:

General and personal knowledge; procedures (riding a bike, using a key)

- *Losses in these areas may indicate a more serious problem, so talk to your doctor.*

### Memory Disorders

#### Alzheimer's

- This is a degenerative disease that causes severe impairment of memory and thinking.
- It seriously affects daily functioning.

#### Warning signs:

- Gaps in **Procedural** memory (no longer knowing how to use a key, find your way home, get dressed)
- Impaired judgement (repeatedly leaving stove on, dressing inappropriately)
- Misplacing things (iron in refrigerator)
- Changes in mood, behavior, personality
- **Causes are complex *but* may include heredity, environment, and life-style.**

#### Clinical Depression

Prolonged depression leads to difficulties in concentrating and short-term memory.

- *Ask your doctor for more information.*



## Possible Causes of Memory Decline

### Alcoholism and substance abuse

- Vitamin B-12 Deficiency
- Poor Nutrition
- Dehydration
- Prolonged Stress or Anxiety
- Hormonal or chemical changes
- Sudden illness or infection



### Some Medications - see your doctor

- some anti-depressants
- some anti-histamines
- anti-anxiety
- blood-pressure
- anti-epilepsy



## Ways to Reduce & Manage Memory Decline and Loss

- **Stay Physically Active**
  - 2.5 hours per week
- **Stay Socially Active**
  - play games, walk with a friend, go out for lunch, join a club, take a class, volunteer
- **Stay Mentally Active**
  - Learn new things (an instrument, a dance, a language, a skill).
  - Read.
  - Complete crossword, cryptic and other puzzles.
  - Play Trivia Games.
  - Challenge yourself to memorize information.
  - Tell stories.

## Eat Nutritious Food

- colourful fruits, vegetables, legumes
- fish
- good fats – flaxseed, olive oil, avocado, nuts

## Stay Hydrated

## Keep a Positive Attitude

## Manage Stress

- Exercise and meditate.
- Learn to say “NO”.
- Express your feelings.
- Avoid hot-button topics.
- Accept that you can’t control everything.

## Get Adequate Sleep (normally 8 hours)

## Use Sensory Aids (Glasses, hearing aids)

## Modify Learning Strategies

- Give yourself more time to learn.
- Avoid distractions; no multitasking!
- Use a highlighter for key points.
- Engage more brain when you learn - (hear it, read it, say it, sing it, move with it, teach it).

## Be Consistent

- Install a hook for keys.
- Record all appointments in calendar.
- Allocate a place for glasses.
- Keep a “to do” list.
- Write things down.

## Declutter your Home

- Allocate a place for all important papers.
- Regularly toss out unnecessary items.

## RESOURCES

- For More Information on Alzheimer's, contact the Alzheimer's Society of Canada [www.alzheimer.ca](http://www.alzheimer.ca)
  - British Columbia Alzheimer's Resources <https://www.alzheimers.net/resources/>
  - Dementia - Seniors First BC <http://seniorsfirstbc.ca/for-professionals/dementia/>
  - Help Guide <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/alzheimers-dementia-aging/age-related-memory-loss.htm>
  - Memory and Aging <https://www.apa.org/pi/aging/memory-and-aging.pdf>
  - Best Practice Guideline for Accommodating and Managing Dementia in Residential Care <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2012/bpsd-guideline.pdf>
  - A Guide to Your Care [http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2007/Guide\\_to\\_Your\\_Care\\_Booklet2007\\_Final.pdf](http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2007/Guide_to_Your_Care_Booklet2007_Final.pdf)
- Community Care Services in B.C.
- For information on home and including care options and cost, who pays for care, eligibility requirements, and how to arrange care. <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-topics/uf4984>
  - HealthLink BC Dementia <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthtopics/uf4984>
  - 8-1-1: HealthLink BC - call for access to a registered nurse and pharmacist

