



SENIOR HEALTH

Memory

HOW TO IMPROVE IT

People of all ages have trouble with memory. But as you age, memory problems may become more frequent. Increased forgetfulness is generally expected as we get older.

Sometimes progressive memory loss can be a symptom of a brain disorder, such as Alzheimer's disease or dementia. If you suspect one of these disorders, consult your doctor.



POSSIBLE CAUSES OF MEMORY LOSS

- reaction to medication*
- or alcohol*
- improperly taken medications*
- infections*
- thyroid problems*
- liver and kidney problems*
- heart disease*
- diabetes*
- dehydration*

TIPS FOR IMPROVING YOUR MEMORY

- **Avoid pressuring yourself.** Forgetting important things is frustrating, but worrying about it can make it worse. Try to retain a sense of humor and perspective.
- **Use your senses.** Wear your glasses or hearing aid so you can see and hear information clearly.
- **Develop a plan** for taking your prescribed medications and make your doctor aware of any memory loss you experience.
- **Take care of your mental health.** Depression can affect memory as well as the ability to think. If you suspect you have depression, see your doctor.
- **Eat right and exercise.** Poor nutrition makes receiving and recalling information harder for the brain. Exercise increases blood flow to the brain.
- **Exercise your brain.** Games, classes and new hobbies can work your memory.
- **Do one activity at a time.** Avoid dividing your attention.
- **Establish a routine.** For example, when you come home, place your keys in the dish by the door and hang up your coat. When it's time to leave, you know where to find them. Keep by your door the things you need to take with you when you leave.
- **Take notes.** Post them in appropriate places to trigger your memory. Make a daily list of things to do. Cross off tasks as you accomplish them.
- **Be aware of stress and fatigue.** When you have a lot of stress, you may have less energy to learn and remember new things. Pace yourself and break things down into smaller, more manageable tasks.