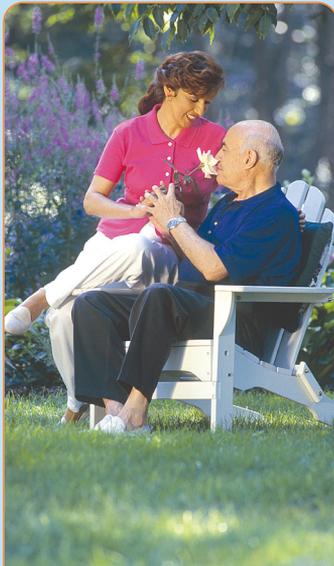




Signs & Symptoms

Signs and symptoms of serious memory loss, such as amnesia, depend on the cause. The memory loss can be partial or complete. It can occur for a short time or persist. It can also come on suddenly or slowly.



Signs and symptoms may be noticed by the person's relatives and friends who can tell when memory lapses worsen.

Memory Loss

With **short-term memory loss**, you can't recall things learned in the past seconds to minutes. With **long-term memory loss**, you forget things learned in the distant past, such as in childhood. It is normal to have some memory loss as you age. It is common to forget where you put your eyeglasses or keys. You may have a hard time recalling the name of a person or place, and say, "It is on the tip of my tongue." This memory loss is temporary and not severe. When it persists or interferes with your daily life, it can be a sign of a problem.

Causes

Other than the normal memory loss that comes with aging, causes include:

- **Depression.** (See at www.HealthyLearn.com.)
- Excess alcohol. Drug use.
- Side effects of some medicines.
- Alzheimer's disease and other forms of **dementia**. Dementias result in a decline of all areas of mental ability. This includes learning, problem solving, language, behaviors, and memory loss.
- **Mild cognitive impairment.** This is a medical illness. With this, people have abnormal memory for their age and education. They have a harder time learning new information or recalling things.
- **Posttraumatic stress disorder.** (See at www.HealthyLearn.com.)
- Seizures. Head trauma.
- Stroke.
- Brain infections or tumors.

Treatment

Memory loss that persists, is severe, or that interferes with daily life needs a medical diagnosis. When another problem is the cause and is treated with success, memory loss improves. For other causes, such as Alzheimer's disease, there is no cure. The goal is to treat symptoms and provide safety and comfort.



Memory Loss, Continued

Questions to Ask

Is the person suddenly very confused or not aware of time, place, persons, and things?

YES



NO

Are these **signs and symptoms of dementia** present?

- Poor memory of recent events, etc.
- Making up stories to explain memory loss.
- Getting lost in familiar places.
- Not being able to finish tasks.
- Social withdrawal or depression.
- General confusion.
- Behaviors that are paranoid, anxious, irritating, childlike, or rigid.
- No interest in personal hygiene, grooming, or getting dressed.
- Unclear speech.

YES



NO

Are any of these problems present?

- **Signs and symptoms of Alzheimer's disease** listed at www.HealthyLearn.com.
- **Signs and symptoms of depression** listed at www.HealthyLearn.com.
- Memory loss that can't be explained.

YES



NO



Self-Care / Prevention

To Help Prevent Memory Loss

- Keep the brain active. Read, do puzzles, etc.
- Eat a balanced diet. Take vitamins and minerals, as advised by your doctor.

- Get regular exercise.
- Protect the head from injury.
- Follow tips under **Prevention for Stroke (Brain Attack)** listed at www.HealthyLearn.com.
- Don't smoke or use illegal drugs. Limit alcohol.
- Manage stress.
- Get regular eye exams. Get your hearing checked. If needed, wear eyeglasses and/or a hearing aid.

To Help Remember Things

- Follow a routine for daily and weekly activities.
- Listen carefully. Link newly learned things to past memories.
- Repeat what you want to remember out loud. Write it down if you need to.
- Keep track of important things to do, phone numbers, etc. Use a calendar, planner, PDA, etc.
- Set up a system to remind you of daily medications to take, bills to pay, appointments to keep, etc.
- Put your keys, eyeglasses, etc. in the same place.



See also **Self-Care / Prevention for Alzheimer's Disease** at www.HealthyLearn.com.



Get more information from:

HealthyLearn® • www.HealthyLearn.com