



Memory Lapses or Memory Losses

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As we age, memory lapses become common. It's annoying to forget where you put your key, but it's not unusual (and treatable). But, if you fail what a key is for or how to use it, you may have what doctors call dementia.

Normal Memory Lapses	Non-Normal Memory Losses
You are worried about your memory, but your relatives are not.	Relatives are concerned, but you are not aware of the problem.
You remember the incidents of memory losses.	You do not remember the events.
You have occasional difficulty finding words or remembering names.	You demonstrates frequent pauses and substitutions when finding words.
You remember important events.	You forget important things.

You remain interested in people and your social skills are intact.	You become withdrawn or behaves inappropriately.
You can function independently.	You grows dependent on others for activities of daily life.
You don't get lost in familiar territory, though you may have to pause to find your way.	You get lost while driving or walking; may take hours to get home.

Severe memory loss is usually identified by a relative or friend.

Tips for Keeping your Memory

1. **Get mental stimulation.** Do something NEW, be it reading a new book, word puzzles, any new craft, or Brain exercise programs.
2. **Get your Heart in Shape.** Exercise daily, at least 30-minutes a day. Keep your calories down; load up on fruits, vegetables, and fish. Cut down on saturated and trans fats and salt (sodium). Keep your cholesterol down. If you have high blood pressure (hypertension), get it treated.
3. **Improve your Blood Sugar.** Diabetes is a significant risk factor, for memory loss.
4. **Avoid tobacco.** This is the essential way to prevent disease.
5. **Don't abuse alcohol.** People who drink heavily are courting disaster.
6. **Consider low-dose aspirin.** Some evidence suggests that long-term use of aspirin and other anti-inflammatory drugs may reduce the risk of memory loss. Ask your doctor before starting to use aspirin.
7. **Stay calm.** Stress, depression, and sleep de-privation impair mental function.
8. **Protect your head.** Wear a helmet was necessary. Head injuries increase the risk of memory loss.

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