

GENERAL TIPS FOR MANAGING MEMORY PROBLEMS

INFORMATION FOR OLDER ADULTS, FAMILIES,
AND CAREGIVERS



READ THIS PAMPHLET TO LEARN:

- Ways to Improve Memory Problems.
- Tips for Caregivers Helping those with Memory Problems.
- About Resources to Improve Your Memory.



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WHAT ARE WAYS TO DEAL WITH MEMORY PROBLEMS?

A problem with your memory can make it hard for you to do everyday activities. Sometimes, it can also affect your safety. Some memory problems can be mild, while others may have more serious effects, such as memory decline. Here are some tips that you, your family, friends, and caregivers may want to use to help with memory problems.

Everyone's memory problems can be different and can be caused by many medical problems, including medications. Speak with your health care provider for a specific diagnosis and more specific tips that may work better for you, especially if there are safety concerns.

WHAT ARE SOME TIPS TO HELP DEAL WITH MEMORY PROBLEMS?



BE ORGANIZED

- Use a day planner or calendar to organize your appointments.
- Be consistent. For example, try to do the same things at the same time each day. Follow your weekly schedule.
- Always keep things in the same place. For example, always leave your keys by the front door.
- Use a pill organizer to help you keep track of your medications. Or ask your pharmacy to put your pills in a "blister pack".



WRITE IT DOWN

- Write down all your appointments on one calendar or day planner and check it often.
- Make lists and cross off each task after you finish it.
- Use one notebook to write down any important information that you have received or may need.
- Keep a list of important phone numbers next to the phone. You can also put these numbers in your mobile phone.



USE SIGNS

- Post reminder signs. For example: “bring your keys”, “turn off the stove”, “unplug the iron”, or “lock your doors”.
- Use labels. For example: label cupboards and drawers with words or pictures that describe what is inside.



USE ALARMS AND TIMERS

- Use a timer when you are using the stove or oven. Consider using appliances that turn off by themselves, such as a microwave, auto-off electric kettle, or iron.
- Use alarms to remind you to do things, such as taking your pills or going to an appointment. You may be able to use the alarm feature in your mobile phone for this.



WHEN LEARNING SOMETHING NEW

- Do it in a quiet place so you can focus fully.
Turn off the radio and TV to help concentrate.
- Pay close attention.
- Repeat or practise what you want to remember.
- If there is a lot to learn, break it down into smaller steps and learn a little bit at a time.
- Write down the information that may help you later.



KEEP YOUR MIND AND BODY ACTIVE & HEALTHY

- Eat a balanced diet.
- Exercise regularly (older adults should aim to exercise for 30 minutes per day).
- Sleep and rest regularly.
- Manage your stress.
- Keep active in social activities/outings.
- Do puzzles and memory games such as crosswords, sudoku, or cards.

WHAT ARE MEMORY TIPS FOR FAMILY, FRIENDS & CAREGIVERS?

If you are caring for an older adult that has memory problems, consider these tips:



- Talk slowly to give the person time to process what you say.
- Speak in short phrases. Pause between sentences.
- Repeat information.
- Ask the person to repeat what you said, or give a summary in their own words. This makes sure they understood you.

OTHER TIPS THAT MAY HELP:

- Do not interrupt your friend or family member unless you have to.
- Talk about one thing at a time. Warn them when you want to change the subject.
- Keep a quiet place for the person to work, read, or watch TV.
- Call the person to remind them to take their pills, go to an appointment, or do other tasks.
- Note that it can take time and effort to learn to use a new memory strategy.
- Allow opportunities for the person to practise new memory strategies as it applies to his or her routine (example: finding information in their notebook or phone).
- Over time, the person or life demands may change. This may result in a need to change the memory strategy too.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

HEALTHINAGING.ORG - ELDERCARE AT HOME: MEMORY PROBLEMS

Healthinaging.org offers resources for caregivers of those with memory problems. This resource offers strategies for dealing with a loved one or friend with memory loss.



<https://www.healthinaging.org/tools-and-tips/caregiver-guide-memory-problems>

HARVARD HEALTH - PROTECTING MEMORY: STRATEGIES FOR HEALTHY BRAIN AGING

Harvard Health offers tips on preventing memory problems. This resource includes



<https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/protecting-memory-strategies-for-healthy-brain-aging>

RELEVANT RESOURCES IN OUR SERIES

- Living Longer, Living Well – Your Guide to Healthy Ageing
- How to Recognize and Manage Delirium
- Recognizing and Managing Hearing Loss
- Safe Medication Use for Older Adults

ADDITIONAL HEALTH RESOURCES IN OUR SERIES:

- Advance Care Planning: How to Start the Conversation
- Alcohol and Your Health
- Calcium, Vitamin D and Bone Health
- Improving Urinary Incontinence
- Managing Caregiver Stress
- Managing Chronic Pain
- Managing Common Mental Health Conditions in Older Adults
- Managing Constipation
- Managing Mild Cognitive Impairment, Alzheimer’s Disease And Other Dementias
- Managing Multiple Chronic Health Conditions
- Managing Sedative-Hypnotic Use Among Older Adults
- Managing Sleep in Older Adults
- Managing Substance Use and Addictive Disorders As You Age
- Preventing Falls at Home
- Recognizing and Managing Anxiety
- Recognizing and Managing Depression
- Substitute Decision Makers and Powers of Attorney
- Understanding Your Palliative Care Options

ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY RESOURCES IN OUR SERIES:

- Elder Abuse
- Meals on Wheels
- Housing Options for Older Adults
- Community Transportation Options
- How to Register for Wheel-Trans
- Driving Assessment Services
- Funding for Mobility Aids from the Assistive Devices Program

Visit www.sinaigeriatrics.ca/healtheducation for additional resources for older adults, families and caregivers.

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