

# Normal Aging $\neq$ Dementia

Dementia is not a normal part of aging. About 1 in 9 older adults have Alzheimer's disease, the most common type of dementia. With normal aging, we can be more forgetful. Unlike dementia, it should not disrupt daily activities. It is important to be able to know the difference so you know when to talk to your health care team. Below are some signs and/or symptoms of dementia contrasted to normal age-related changes.

## Typical age-related changes

- Occasionally misplacing items, but able to retrace steps to find them
- Struggling to find a word or the day, but remembering it later
- Making a decision without fully thinking it through once in a while

## What does not normally change

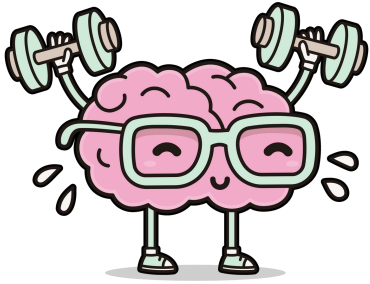
- Skills
- Knowledge and routine memory
- Language

## Signs of Dementia

- Misplacing things and not able to retrace steps to find them
- Difficulty having a conversation or knowing the date
- Poor judgement and decision making
- Withdrawing from social activities
- Wandering and getting lost
- Challenges with budgeting or planning
- Difficulty completing familiar tasks
- Trouble naming items or close family members

# What You Can Do

Here are a few things you can do to continue to take care of your brain health and help you deal with forgetfulness!



## Keep your brain active!

Engage your brain with books, puzzles, or board games. Learn a new skill and continue your hobbies! Volunteer and do other activities you find meaningful. Stay connected with your family and friends! Don't forget to have fun and reduce your stress!

## Take care of your body!

Be sure to get moving and do physical activities (like biking, walking, or gardening) that you enjoy! Get enough sleep each night. Quit smoking and limiting alcohol if you currently do these. If you have other medical conditions, be sure to keep those under control and check with your provider or pharmacist if these impact your brain.

## Be consistent!

Build and follow a daily routine that gives yourself time to do the things you need to. Keep your keys, glasses, phone, and wallet in the same place every day, so you know where to find it each time. Keep a calendar for important events like health care appointments. For tasks such as turning off the stove, keep a sticky note to remind you.

## Learn more!

- Contact the Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral (ADEAR) Center at 800-438-4380 if you have questions about or need supportive services for Alzheimer's Disease.
- <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/topics/memory-loss-and-forgetfulness>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/index.html>