



# Is It Normal Aging or Memory Loss?



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# Is Your Memory Normal?



- The Good News: Experts say some memory lapses are normal!
- Three stages of memory:
  - Encoding
  - Consolidation
  - Retrieval

# Time: Memory's Worst Enemy

- Forgetfulness happens at all ages
- After taking in information, memory traces begin to deteriorate
- Memory distortion is the phenomenon where as time passes, our ability to accurately recall events becomes diminished



# Other Causes of Memory Loss

- Stress and anxiety
- ADHD
- Depression
- Metabolic diseases
- Alcoholism
- Vitamin B-12 deficiency
- Infections
- Prescription and over-the-counter medications

# 10 Warning Signs of Memory Loss



- What's the difference between normal forgetfulness and mild cognitive impairment (MCI) or early stage dementia?
- The Alzheimer Society has developed a list of 10 warning signs of dementia.

# Warning Signs of Memory Loss

1. Memory loss that affects day-to-day function
2. Difficulty performing familiar tasks
3. Problems with language



# Warning Signs of Memory Loss



4. Disorientation of time and place
5. Poor or decreased judgment
6. Problems with abstract thinking
7. Misplacing things

# Warning Signs of Memory Loss

8. Changes in mood and behavior
9. Changes in personality
10. Loss of initiative





# Normal Aging vs. Dementia

## Normal Aging

- Forgetting parts of an experience
- Forgetting where you park the car
- Forgetting events from distant past
- Forgetting a person's name and recalling it later

## Dementia

- Forgetting an entire experience
- Forgetting how to drive a car
- Forgetting recent events
- Loss of function, confusion or decreasing alertness
- Symptoms become more frequent or severe

# Making a Diagnosis



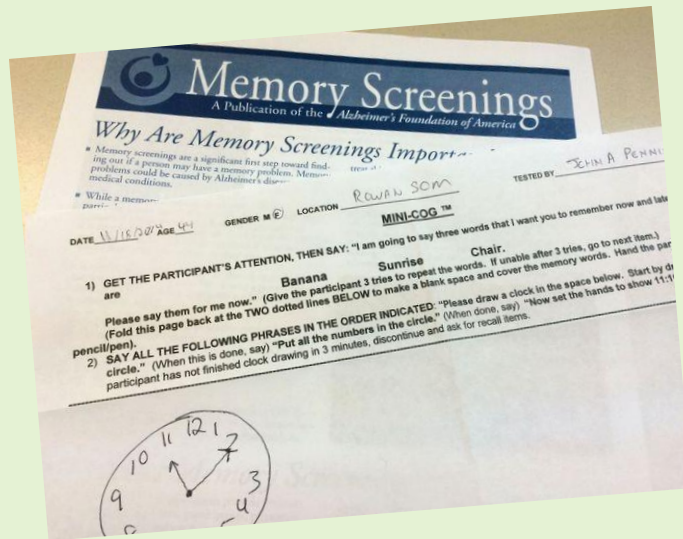
- There is no single test that can determine if a person has Alzheimer's disease.
- A diagnosis is made through a series of tests that help eliminate other possible causes.

# Tests & Assessments

- Analysis of background information
- Physical exam and tests
- Mental tests



# Memory Screening Tests



- Memory Screening Tests usually involves giving someone a simple mental status test.
- After the test, the result is a number that shows if someone may have memory problems.

# Use It or Lose It



- Four ways to slow down brain aging:
  - Mental activity
  - Physical fitness
  - Stress reduction
  - Healthy diet

# Other Ways to Prevent Memory Loss

- Focus your attention
- Reduce stress
- Choose to snooze
- Structure your environment
- Try memory tricks



# To Be Sure...



People who are experiencing memory issues accompanied by difficulties in day-to-day activities and skills should contact their health-care provider.