

Testing for Memory Loss



FACT SHEETS FOR OLDER ADULTS ARE A JOINT PROJECT OF IONA AND THE DC OFFICE ON AGING

It's a good idea to see your regular doctor if you're worried about your memory. You may be having changes in your memory that are normal for everyone as they get older. Or you may be having some memory changes that are signs of an illness.

IS THIS NORMAL?

As we get older, it can take us longer to learn new things. And it may take us longer to remember something, like someone's name. Those changes are normal.

Here are some signs you might be having more serious trouble with your memory:

- You're having trouble figuring out how to do things that used to be easy for you—like paying bills or keeping track of your medicine.
- You get confused when you drive or walk somewhere you usually go.

CAUSES AND TREATMENT

Many health problems can cause memory changes. Some of these can be treated, for example, certain kinds of infections, or not taking the right vitamins or drinking enough liquids. Some medicines can cause memory loss.

Other causes of memory loss are Alzheimer's disease and strokes.

It is important to see a doctor to figure out what might be causing your memory loss and what to do about it.

MEMORY CLINICS

GEORGETOWN UNIV. MEMORY DISORDERS PROGRAM

3800 Reservoir Rd., NW
Pasquerilla Bldg., 7th Floor
Phone: Carolyn Ward at
202-784-6671
memory.georgetown.edu

Accepts Medicare, Medicaid, & other major insurances

GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIV. MEMORY DISORDERS CLINIC

2150 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Phone: 202-741-2222,
press 5 for all other departments

Accepts Medicare, Medicaid, & other major insurances

THE NEUROLOGY CENTER

Locations in NW and NE DC,
and in MD

Phone: 301-562-7200,
press 1 for appointments

Accepts Medicare & other major insurances

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CHOOSING A DOCTOR

Start by talking to your regular doctor (your internist or primary care physician). Your doctor may give you a referral to see a neurologist or a geriatrician (a doctor who works with older adults). You can also find them at several specialty memory clinics in DC. We have listed a few on the front of this card in the right column.

Both neurologists and geriatricians are the best kinds of doctors to see about memory loss. Keep in mind that getting an appointment may take several weeks to several months.

At your appointment, your doctor may:

- Ask you (and any relative or friend you bring with you) about your memory, and your health history.
- Give you a memory test by asking you some questions like having you remember a list of words.
- Order blood work.

The doctor may also have you get:

- A scan of your brain.
- More question and answer testing with a neuropsychologist.

PREPARING FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT

Be sure to take the following information with you to your appointment.

- Your health information
- A list of the medicines you are taking
- A list of the other doctors you see
- Your Medicare card and other insurance cards

It's also a good idea to bring along a relative or friend who can talk about any memory changes they are seeing.

You can also find local geriatricians and neurologists on Medicare's website:

[medicare.gov/physiciancompare](https://www.medicare.gov/physiciancompare)

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• Visit [iona.org](https://www.iona.org) or call
• 202-895-9448
• for other helpful fact sheets.

Adult Day Health Programs

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