

TIPS to Help MEMORY

Important to brain health are a healthy diet, daily physical exercise and daily brain exercise. Some examples of brain exercise include: crossword or other word puzzles, jigsaw puzzles, number puzzles, reading and discussing the story, discussing details heard on TV or the radio, looking at and discussing pictures or art, writing stories or memories, writing letters or brief notes, drawing or do other arts and crafts, joining activities with friends and family, doing activities alone, listening to and playing music, singing or humming while thinking of the words, working with numbers (counting change or keeping score), and planning (and doing) meals or social events.

Sometimes problems occur with short-term memory. Sometimes there are changes in the ability to think, express oneself in words or complete the steps of tasks. As time passes, people may change in skills using their hands, in the ability to understand speech and to express themselves, in behavior, in interests and in drive. Personality may become more outgoing and spontaneous (sometimes inappropriate) or more shy and withdrawn. The abilities may be better during the morning and worse at the end of the day.

General Tips: plan ahead, allow enough time for tasks or appointments, make steps easy for daily tasks like dressing, stay positive and patient when helping or giving direct care, and keep activities and the setting safe. **Caregivers need regular respite!**

TIPS: When you begin to have mild memory problems

1. Use reminder notes, a calendar.
2. Pay attention, focus, look, listen and repeat information to oneself.
3. Repeat it a few times.
4. Do one thing (and one step) at a time.
5. Stay on a routine.
6. Keep handy simple directions to destination and to return home.
7. Keep reminder notes together, in one place.
8. Healthy lifestyle with daily physical and brain exercise.

TIPS: When caring for someone with medium to severe memory problems

1. Stay on a daily and weekly routine. Do activities outdoors when possible.
2. Keep activities simple. Schedule rest times.
3. Discuss real things (that can be seen, felt, heard, tasted, smelled, etc.) not ideas.
4. Encourage, not push.
5. Speak in brief sentences (2 - 4 words). Repeat.
6. Allow enough time; do it slowly

CAREGIVERS OF PEOPLE WITH MEMORY LOSS - REMEMBER TO:

1. Call the person by name. Use eye to eye contact, a smile and stay relaxed.
2. Show and tell the person the time, the date, the next activity.
3. Hang a large calendar. Keep the daily schedule handy and follow it. Mark off yesterday, finished activities and past appointments. Post a sign or picture to note special activities.
4. When talking, mix words with pictures and body actions.
5. Keep person up to date. Discuss: *special events, community & world news, the weather, pets, recipes, TV & radio shows, family activities, sports, photos.*
6. Encourage the use of simple, fun games, like cards and checkers.
7. Label/name tags on people, photos, rooms, cabinets, furniture.
8. Use extra light; a constant night light.