

The Differences Between Normal Memory Loss and Alzheimer's

As we age, we often find it difficult to remember certain things, but how do we know what is normal memory loss and what is something more concerning? Consider these key differences:

Memory Loss

Some degree of memory loss is fairly common when it comes to aging. Slight memory loss as you age doesn't prevent you from living your life to the fullest. Below are some examples of common memory loss as a result of aging.

- Forgetting the date or a person's name, but remembering it later that day
- Misplacing common household items like your glasses or keys but being able to retrace your steps to find them later.
- Forgetting or having trouble finding the right word once in a while.
- Making a bad decision once in a while.
- Changes in memory are manageable and don't disrupt the ability to maintain a social life, work, or live independently.

Alzheimer's

It's important to recognize early warning signs and understand the differences between regular decline in memory as you age and a more serious problem. See below for some warning signs of Alzheimer's.

- Lose track of dates or the passage of time and not remembering later. You may forget where you are or how you got there.
- May put items in unusual places or lose items and not be able to retrace your steps to find them. People with Alzheimer's may accuse others of stealing.
- Difficulty speaking or following conversation. Those with Alzheimer's can find it hard to come up with the correct word and can repeat themselves.
- Making poor decisions or bad judgements a majority of the time. This may affect the ways in which you go about your day and any routines you may have.

If you notice one or more of these signs in either yourself or a loved one, it may be difficult to know what to do. While it can be nerve-racking to talk with a loved one about these signs, it's important, and it is also key to have a conversation with your family members and your doctor so you can get a proper evaluation. Addressing these warning signs early can help maintain your loved one's independence longer, and it also gives you time to explore your best options with a medical professional.