

Treatable Causes of Memory Loss



Did you know: there are many medical conditions that mimic symptoms of Alzheimer's disease?

Many older adults suffer from memory loss but never receive proper medical attention because of the belief that it is a normal part of the aging process. Symptoms from vitamin deficiency, medications, metabolic changes, etc. can mimic Alzheimer's disease and may cause memory problems. Here are a few examples of more common, treatable conditions. Early diagnosis and treatment could improve memory.

Common conditions

- **Thyroid deficiency:** Possible thyroid deficiency can be checked by a physician and remedied with medication.
- **Infections:** Urinary tract or bladder infections are the most common infections, but any infection can cause memory loss.
- **Lung disease:** Decreased lung capacity may mean insufficient oxygen to the brain. Memory loss may completely resolve when the person receives oxygen treatments.
- **Cancer:** Tumors in the brain, liver or other organs can lead to memory loss. Prompt diagnosis may mean that the tumor can be removed or reduced through treatment.
- **Depression:** Some people lose interest in others and become confused when they get depressed. Anti-depressant medication may help.
- **Sleep apnea:** Impaired breathing while sleeping may mean insufficient oxygen to the brain. Memory loss may completely resolve when sleep apnea is properly treated.



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Internal factors

- **Poor nutrition:** Body chemistry can become imbalanced from eating meals lacking the full range of necessary nutrients.
- **Dehydration:** Many people do not drink enough fluids, or they consume primarily caffeinated beverages, which flush fluids out of the body.
- **Fluctuation in blood sugar:** People who develop diabetes late in life may go for years without realizing they should ask their physician to check their blood sugar.
- **Sensory loss:** Loss of hearing or sight may interfere with orientation to time and place.

External factors

- **Toxic fumes in the home:** Furnaces sometimes malfunction and leave carbon monoxide in the air, producing confusion and sleepiness. Fixing the furnace may restore alertness. Installing carbon monoxide detectors can alert you to future leaks.
- **Medication combinations:** Taking multiple pills every day can result in mix-ups or medication interactions.
- **Medication toxicity:** Occasionally, too much medication accumulates in the blood. For example, Digoxin (Lanoxin) is a heart medication, which can become toxic.

Learn more about other causes of memory loss by calling our team of dementia experts at 858.492.4400.