



How do you know if it's time to see a Doctor?

- 1) Forgetting names and appointments on occasion is normal. Particularly if we are stressed, or don't have a system for tracking our appointments or obligations. Forgetting recently learned information along with increased frequency and intensity of forgetfulness and difficulty recalling information is important to explore with your physician.
- 2) It is normal to sometimes not be able to find the right word or have it on the tip of your tongue. You or a family member might want to see a doctor if it has become difficult to recall the name of something. If rather than saying, "have you seen my glasses?", you might say, "where are those things I use to help my reading?", this type of language difficulty should be shared with your doctor.
- 3) It's normal to sometimes forget why you went into the other room, or someone's name. If you or a loved one are forgetting how to accomplish daily or familiar tasks, perhaps like how to prepare a meal or use household appliances, or get dressed, it is suggested you see a doctor.
- 4) It is often normal to forget where we were headed, or to not be sure the day of the week. It is not normal to become lost or fairly disoriented in your own neighborhood or a familiar area and not be able to identify the way to get back home.
- 5) It is normal for each of us to have different skills and abilities when it comes to complex tasks or abstract thinking. For example, many people have trouble calculating a tip on demand, or keeping an accurate bank balance. It becomes something to share with your doctor when you or a loved one realizes you may have lost a specific skill or knack for something (like solving word or puzzles) or show a marked difficulty in executing tasks that require complex mental ability.
- 6) There is a difference between the normal temporary misplacement of an item. For example, not being able to find your car keys or misplacing your glasses can be normal. It should be shared with your physician if, you find that you may repeatedly misplace an item in an unusual way. For example you may put your pots and pans in the refrigerator, or put food leftovers in the dishwasher.
- 7) Shifts in mood can be normal. Swift swings in mood from tears and frustration to jubilation and laughter, or sudden fear reactions with those with whom you are quite familiar should be shared with your physician.
- 8) It is normal to experience phases of laziness, or times when we want to just sit and do nothing. It should be shared with your physician if a sudden or lasting loss of initiative occurs particularly combined with an increase in sleep and general motivation.
- 9) It is normal to at times not remember if we told someone something on our mind. If you notice you repeat things often, or if family members point out that you don't remember saying things and this leads to frequent repetition, this should be shared with your physician.
- 10) There are many other resources for information on when it's time to see a Doctor. The Alzheimer's Association is a wonderful resource. Find them on the web at www.alz.org and in the local community at www.alz-nic.org

