



Real solutions for real business

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Wellness Wire

Spring
2010

Published by CARE's WorkLife Solutions to help employees with life management issues.

Facts on Forgetting

At a business gathering you realize that you've already forgotten the name of the person whose hand you're currently shaking. Or maybe you've opened your kitchen cabinet without having the slightest idea what you're looking for. Does this mean you're headed down a one-way street toward Alzheimer's disease or some other form of dementia? Most likely, no!

We've all had days when we've misplaced our keys or called our children by every name but their own. Humor about memory loss and aging abounds and many people make joking, but nervous, references to "early Alzheimer's." Rest assured: Forgetting what you ate for dinner last night is not typically a symptom of something more serious, or an inevitable part of the aging process.

We're not saying that aging doesn't have any effect on our ability to remember things; it does. But not in the way most people think. Contrary to the popular notion that we lose our memory because we lose brain cells with age, new studies show that we can generate new brain cells throughout our lives. Recent studies by the National Institute on Aging suggest that keeping our minds active is key to maintaining proper brain function. Our brain is a muscle that needs to be exercised.

However, we do lose some ability to process and retrieve new information as we get older, which makes it harder to

- Do more than one thing at a time, or multitask
- Learn new things without increased effort
- Remember names and numbers

In addition to these changes in short-term memory, aging makes it more difficult to retrieve information from long-term memory. The best way to ensure that you retain your memory as you age is to stay physically active, eat a healthy diet, and use your brain! Adequate rest, low levels of stress, and keeping chronic diseases like high blood pressure and diabetes under control will also help keep your memory in tip-top shape.

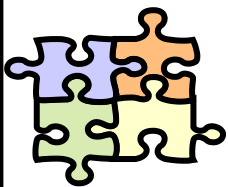
Memory lapses are cause for concern when they start to interfere with your life, your ability to function independently, and your ability to manage your work or home. In such cases, seek further medical testing. Judging the seriousness of your own memory loss can be difficult. If your memory loss is due to something more serious, you'll probably forget that you forgot. Asking close friends and family members may be necessary to determine the severity of your memory loss as well as your ability to function normally.

Due to the aging population, studies show that the incidence of memory problems and Alzheimer's disease is rising. If you are having concerns about memory loss, be sure to discuss them with your doctor.

Tips to Remember

Researchers have found that exercise triggers the production of a chemical in the brain that enhances communication between neurons, researchers have found. This occurs in many areas of the brain, including the area associated with controlling memory processing. So staying physically fit will benefit not only your body, but your brain as well.

To keep your mind active, do puzzles, play board games, read books, listen to news reports, or visit museums.



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CARE's WorkLife Solutions - Services are FREE and confidential to employees, their spouses and dependents. Call Toll Free 866.888.1555 or www.caresworklifesolutions.com

Plan ahead for visit with elderly friend or relative

Spending time with an elderly relative or friend gives that person important social interaction, a distraction from health issues or simply a break from the daily routine. Here are a few tips to make the most of your visit.

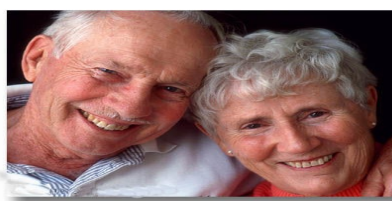
- ◆ Call ahead to schedule a time to visit around the person's mealtimes, sleeping schedule and medication schedule.
- ◆ If you are visiting a woman, take a bottle of nail polish so you can give her a manicure. It only takes a few minutes, and it will encourage face-to-face attention. Make sure the fragrance won't bother her, or those around her.
- ◆ If you are visiting a man, take shoe polish and the goods that go with it, so you can give his shoes a shine while you're there. Remember, in the 1940s and 1950s, a shoe shine was a grand treat for any gentleman.
- ◆ Bring a newspaper or magazine and to them.
- ◆ Offer to go for a walk or a wheelchair tour around the area.
- ◆ When the elderly offer you advice, listen and consider.
- ◆ Offer to meet their friends in the area, especially the caregivers or other members of the nursing home staff, or assisted living team.
- ◆ Ask questions in which they can give you their advice about life. For instance: "I know you were always so good at preparing dinner for your family. How did you make such delicious meals that were affordable?" Or, "I feel like a real dolt when I talk to my wife. How did you keep Mildred smiling all those years?"
- ◆ Show concern about the person's health status by making general, encouraging, comments, such as "I hope you're doing well." Be careful though not to give medical advice.

*Tips taken from www.askhow.com

CARE's WorkLife Solutions also offers gerontology services. Older Adult Specialist, Marcia Reylea offers trainings on understanding seniors, improving relationships with elders as well as the evolution of family roles in caregiving. Please call 866.888.1555 for more

Aging and Your Eyes: Five Steps to Protect Your Eyesight

1. **Have your eyes checked every 1 or 2 years by an eye care professional.** This can be an ophthalmologist or optometrist. He or she should put drops in your eyes to enlarge (*dilate*) your pupils. This is the only way to find some eye diseases, such as diabetic retinopathy, that have no early signs or symptoms. If you wear glasses, they should be checked too.
2. **Find out if you are at high risk for eye disease.** Are you over age 65? Are you African American and over age 40? Do you or people in your family have diabetes or eye disease? If so, you need to have a dilated eye exam.
3. **Have regular physical exams to check for diseases like diabetes and high blood pressure.** These diseases can cause eye problems if not treated.
4. **See an eye care professional right away if you suddenly cannot see or everything looks dim or if you see flashes of light.** Also see an eye care professional if you have eye pain, fluid coming from the eye, double vision, redness, or swelling of your eye or eyelid.
5. **Wear sunglasses that block ultraviolet (UV) radiation and a hat with a wide brim when outside.** This will protect your eyes from too much sunlight, which can raise your risk of getting cataracts.



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Save the Date!

Communities in Crisis:
Preventing, Responding and Recovering from Economic
Trauma

Date: September 30, 2010

Time: 8:00am - 3:30pm

Location: Assumption Cultural Center, St. Clair Shores

Contact us to be added to our list for future details.

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