



Strategies for Dealing with Memory Loss

UHN

Information for patients and families

Read this information for tips to help you:

- cope with changes in your memory
- stay safe at home



A problem with your memory can make it hard for you to do your daily activities. It can make learning new things difficult. You may even find that the things you have been doing for years are now harder to do.

Here are some strategies or tips that will help you cope with changes in your memory and keep you safe at home.



Keep a list of important phone numbers in large print next to the phone.

- Put a 911 sticker on the phone.
- Preset your phone with emergency contact numbers (for example, your family, your doctor or a friend). Then, you will only need to press 1 button to make a call. Label the buttons.
- You can also wear a medical alert device that will make sure you are able to get help when you need it.

Please visit the UHN Patient Education website for more health information: www.uhnpatienteducation.ca
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Revised: 05/2016
Form: D-5164



Use a calendar to keep track of the days.

Write down all your appointments on one calendar and check it often.



Use one notebook to write down any important information you need.

This could include:

- your address and phone number
- the names and phone numbers of your doctors, family and friends



Make a “To Do” list.

Write a list of things you want to do. Cross off each item after you have done it. Do one thing at a time.



Try to do the same things at the same time each day.

Follow a weekly schedule to help you get what you need done.



Use a pill organizer to help you keep track of your medicines.

Or have your pharmacy prepare your medicines in a blister pack.



You can also do these things to help you remember to take your medicines:

- Ask someone to remind you.
- Set an alarm clock.
- Set your watch alarm to make a sound at the right time.



Post signs to remind you to turn off appliances, such as the stove or iron, and to lock your doors.



Use a timer when you are using the stove or oven.

Use a microwave instead, if you have one. Buy a kettle that shuts off by itself when the water is boiled. Always stay in the kitchen when you are cooking.



Make sure your smoke detector is working.

Replace the battery regularly. Also, think about putting a carbon monoxide detector in your home.



Keep items, such as keys, in the same place all the time.

This will help you remember where they are. Keep things where you can easily see them.



Label cupboards and drawers with words or pictures that describe what is inside.

Have someone help you organize closets and drawers to make it easier to find what you need.



Ask someone you trust to help you manage your bills and finances.

Arrange to have your cheques deposited directly into your bank account. You can also have your bills paid through the bank.



Ask people to repeat what they have said if you are not sure.

You can also have them write it down for you.

Try using these strategies. Talk about them with your family and health care team. If you have any questions or concerns, ask your doctor to refer you to an occupational therapist.

An occupational therapist can help you to use these strategies. They can also work with you to find new ways to do the things that are important to you.

You can find more information and resources about memory loss at the following websites:

Alzheimer Society www.alzheimertoronto.org

Dementia Network www.dementiatoronto.org

Regional Geriatric Program www.rgp.toronto.on.ca