

7

COMMON CAUSES OF FORGETFULNESS

Amen Clinics

1. Not Enough zzzzz's



A number of studies link sleep problems to a higher risk of memory issues. Scientists have found that while you sleep, your brain cleans out toxins that build up throughout the day. Without adequate sleep, the brain's waste management crew does not have enough time to do its job and trash piles up, causing brain fog and memory problems. One study found that in older people, a lack of deep sleep causes a 55% drop in memory the next day.

>>> *Tip: Aim for 7-8 hours of sleep each night. Create a nighttime routine to help promote restful sleep.*

2. Underactive Thyroid

At Amen Clinics, brain SPECT imaging scans of people with low levels of thyroid hormone show overall decreased brain activity, which often leads to cognitive impairment and brain fog. In fact, research shows that more than 80% of people with low-grade hypothyroidism have impaired memory function.



>>> *Tip: Get your thyroid levels checked and optimize them if necessary.*

3. Too Much Multitasking



In some cases, forgetfulness may have less to do with memory problems and more to do with distractions. A 2020 survey of 2,000 people in the U.S. shows that 6 in 10 Americans experience "multitasking-induced forgetfulness." Juggling too many tasks takes a toll on the brain's memory centers and can have consequences at work, at school, and in relationships.

>>> *Tip: If you want to have better recall, pay attention to information you want to remember. Put down your phone, mute the TV, and listen.*

4. Head Trauma

A single fall off your bike, a slip off a ladder, or a car accident that causes you to hit your head can have lasting consequences on your memory. Many people don't connect the dots from a head injury that may have occurred weeks, months, or even years earlier to forgetfulness. Brain SPECT imaging shows that 40% of psychiatric patients at Amen Clinics have experienced a traumatic injury, but many of them don't remember it.



>>> *Tip: Healing the underlying brain trauma with hyperbaric oxygen therapy, neurofeedback, and other therapies can help restore cognitive function.*

5. Your Medicine Cabinet



Many medications—such as sleep aids, cholesterol-lowering drugs, or anti-anxiety pills—can mess with your memory. For example, sleeping pills act on brain pathways involved in the memory-making process. Cholesterol is critical for healthy brain functioning and decreased levels can interfere with memory. Brain SPECT imaging studies at Amen Clinics show that benzodiazepines for anxiety lower activity in areas of the brain involved in memory formation.

>>> *Tip: Talk to an integrative psychiatrist or functional medicine doctor about treatment methods that don't compromise brain activity and memory.*

6. Untreated ADD/ADHD

A lack of focus is a common sign of ADD/ADHD, but many people don't realize that forgetfulness can also be a symptom of the condition. Some of the hallmark symptoms of ADD/ADHD, including short attention span, distractibility, and disorganization, may contribute to problems with recall. An estimated 4.4% of adults have been diagnosed ADD/ADHD but millions more remain undiagnosed and untreated.



>>> *Tip: Treating ADD/ADHD with a brain-body approach that includes nutrition, nutritional supplements, exercise, lifestyle changes, and medication (when necessary) may improve focus, attention, organization, and memory.*

7. Untreated Depression



Studies have shown that untreated depression significantly increases the risk of memory problems. In fact, depression doubles the risk of cognitive impairment in women and quadruples it in men.

>>> *Tip: The brain imaging work at Amen Clinics shows there are 7 types of depression, and getting a personalized treatment plan for your type of depression is critical to keeping your memory sharp.*

Learn More About Improving Your Memory

Memory problems are NOT normal, even as you age. You can rescue your memory. Because there are so many things that contribute to forgetfulness, it's critical to determine the root causes. Unlike traditional psychiatry, Amen Clinics uses brain SPECT imaging as part of a comprehensive evaluation to help our patients discover the root causes of memory loss. Determining if the brain is showing early signs of Alzheimer's disease (which can cause changes in the brain years before symptoms arise) or other dementias, or if something else is at fault is key to finding the most effective solutions. To learn more, call us at (877) 866-1081 to talk to a specialist today.



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