



BAI Beacon

The Newsletter from Family and Community Services

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What is Normal Age-Related Memory?

As we age, we can all expect to find ourselves in a room and forgetting why we were there; forgetting the name of someone we know well when it is time to make an introduction; talking around the word we are looking for; losing our eye glasses or keys; being more easily distracted and only to focus on one thing at a time. But when do these “normal” changes become more worrisome? The following table outlines the most common changes we experience with aging and contrasts the changes with symptoms more consistent with Alzheimer’s disease.

Normal Aging	Symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease
Slower thinking with occasional mistakes	Slower thinking with added confusion leading to mistakes/frustration/withdrawal
Delayed recall in memory for names, words, places, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ “Tip of the tongue” ➢ “Talking around the word” ➢ Typically find the word/object we forgot 	Short-term memory loss results in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Names/words don’t come back ➢ Repetitiveness & increased forgetfulness ➢ Losing/misplacing things
Decreased ability to multi-task and more prone to distraction	Difficulty with tasks – following directions and staying focused
Takes a bit longer to learn new information but there is continued ability to learn	Inability to learn new information despite multiple attempts, directions, etc.
Maintains &/or creates new interests and hobbies	Loss of initiative and interest in former activities and hobbies
Become “more like yourself”	May experience a change in personality or mood (e.g. withdrawn, irritable, anxious)
Coping strategies around memory issues still work	Limited coping strategies lead to frustration, giving up,
Manage day to day with little assistance	Need increased assistance to manage everyday life

If you or someone you know is experiencing changes more consistent with Alzheimer’s disease, it is important to bring this to the attention of your primary care physician. You can also consider attending a memory screening event offered by Banner Alzheimer’s Institute (BAI) or Banner Sun Health Research Institute (BSHRI).

What is Memory Screening?

Memory screening consists of a series of questions and/or simple tasks that assess memory, thinking, problem solving, calculation, language and more. Most memory screenings will take between 20 – 30 minutes, be administered by a trained professional, and will be held in a quiet location to minimize distractions. Once the screening is completed, the professional will review the results with you and will provide advice/direction that may include tips to improve brain health or how to pursue additional evaluation. Participants are encouraged to share the screening with their health care providers.

(Continued)

2012 Memory Screening Dates:

Friday, Nov. 16
9am – 1pm
Banner Alzheimer’s Institute
901 E. Willetta St.
Phoenix, AZ 85006
20 minute screenings by appointment only
Registration – Call (602) 230-CARE

Wednesday & Thursday, Nov. 14, 15
9am – 3:30pm
Banner Sun Health Research Institute
10515 W. Santa Fe Drive
Sun City, AZ 85351
Requires Registration – Call 623-832-5328

National Memory Screening Day
www.afascreenings.org
(This site lists multiple screening dates and sites around Arizona and the U.S.)

Beacon Bits

Men Who Care Support Group
Wednesday, Nov. 7, 7:30 – 9am
Banner Alzheimer’s Institute, Third Floor Community Library
901 E. Willetta St., Phoenix
Registration not required.
Information: (602) 839-6850

GPS (Giving People Strategies for Memory) Lecture: Creating Meaning and Having Fun for People with Dementia
Friday, Nov. 9, 10:30 am – noon
AZ Museum of Natural History
53 N. MacDonald, Mesa
Registration required: (602) 230-CARE

Banner Alzheimer’s Institute
Banner Health
901 East Willetta Street
Phoenix, AZ 85006



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Most people who attend memory screenings do so because they are interested in getting a baseline score relative to memory and thinking. Others attend because they are concerned about becoming more forgetful or because they have a relative with Alzheimer's disease. Far more women typically attend memory screening than men and interestingly, most men come because they are encouraged by a family member or friend!

Why is Memory Screening Important?

Not all memory issues are related to dementia. For example, depression, vitamin deficiencies or thyroid problems can make memory worse and can be treated. Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) which produces mild memory loss that may eventually lead to Alzheimer's disease when diagnosed early, allows for a health care provider to treat the condition, assist the person to make necessary accommodations for daily performance, and allows the person to potentially get involved in a clinical trial that may possibly slow the condition. Like early diagnosis of other chronic conditions, obtaining an early diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease allows both the patient and family to learn more about the condition, gain support and more proactively plan for the now and the future!

How can I sign up for a Memory Screening?

Both BAI and BSHRI offer routine memory screening by appointment (see side bar). You can also request your primary care physician to provide some type of cognitive screening during your annual exam. Don't be afraid to speak up about any memory concerns you have. One study found that only a quarter of people with memory complaints ever talked to their doctors about their concerns even though they had seen the physician in the past six months. Subtle signs of memory loss are common and difficult to identify during a 15-minute appointment. You are your best advocate for overall health, so speak up!



Ask The Expert

Debbie Harbinson

Dear Debbie:

My mom has been complaining about her memory as of late. I've encouraged her to get an appointment at a memory screening but she is reluctant to do so as I think she is worried that they will tell her she has Alzheimer's disease. What can I do to get her there?

Signed:
Supportive Daughter

Dear Supportive:

I am happy to hear that your mom is comfortable talking to you about her memory concerns as a third of people will never talk to anyone about their memory concerns! In the six years that BAI has been offering community memory screenings, we frequently hear that participants are nervous about having their memory checked.

The professionals involved in memory screenings have a wonderful way to make the participants feel comfortable before the process even begins. No one is rushed through the screening, and we allow time for the participant to ask questions following the screening. When the screening indicates possible problems, we take time to assist the participant (and family if present) to understand what it means. We often discuss other health and social concerns and then assist the participant to find the best plan of action for him/her.

It is important to remember what this is – a screening NOT a diagnosis. Far more evaluation must be done to determine if memory issues are related to Alzheimer's disease or other types of dementia. We frequently see family members come together and all get screened, including spouses, adult child and parent, best friends, etc. We see younger participants who have had a history of head injury; participants post-chemotherapy complaining of memory loss; and participants with a family history of Alzheimer's disease.

Most participants leave with a sigh of relief knowing what to do – even if symptoms seem to be more consistent with Alzheimer's. We frequently hear participants thanking us and their screener for the positive experience and for listening to their concerns. Indeed, the fear of the unknown is what often leaves us feeling paralyzed and stuck.

I'd encourage you and your mom to make appointments at a memory screening because like all screenings, you are seeking out information and assistance to live a healthy and fulfilling life!

Have a question?

To submit your question for future consideration email us at baiinfo@bannerhealth.com

MAPS (Memory Assistance and Planning Session)
Wednesday, Nov. 14, 8:30am – 3:30pm
Foundation for Senior Living
Caregiver House
1201 E. Thomas Road,
Phoenix, AZ 85014
\$40pp (BAI Families), \$60pp (Non-BAI Families)
Cost includes continental breakfast, lunch, instruction & materials
Limited to 30 participants
Registration: (602) 839-6850 or email Baiinfo@bannerhealth.com

COMPASS for Caregivers (Caregivers Of Memory-impaired Persons Acquiring Successful Strategies)
Thursday, November 15, 10 – 11:30 a.m., OR Thursday, November 29, 4 – 5:30pm OR Monday, December 3, 4-5:30pm
Banner Alzheimer's Institute, Third Floor Conference Room
901 E. Willetta St., Phoenix
Registration: (602) 839-6850
Baiinfo@bannerhealth.com

Planning Ahead Class for Caregivers

Monday, Dec. 10, 4 – 6pm
Banner Alzheimer's Institute, Third Floor Conference Room
901 E. Willetta St., Phoenix
Registration: (602) 839-6850
Baiinfo@bannerhealth.com

GPS (Giving People Strategies for Memory Lecture): Avoiding Arguments and Improving Communication Strategies in Dementia
Friday, Dec. 14, 10:30 am – noon
Rio Vista Recreation Center
8866 W. Thunderbird Road, Peoria
Registration required:
(602) 230-CARE

Brain Health Tip:

Rediscover the encyclopedia. You can get a great overview on a number of different subjects when you read an encyclopedia or go online and read Wikipedia. Commit to learning something new several days each week when you read the encyclopedia.

Special Announcement:

Beginning 2013, the Beacon will get a bit "greener." Our desire is to provide this monthly newsletter by email whenever possible. If you get the Beacon via mail and would be willing to get this by way of email, please email RoseAnn.Barton@bannerhealth.com or call 602-839-6918 to provide your email address. We look forward to staying connected with you!

Our Mission

To end Alzheimer's disease without losing a generation, to set a new standard of care for patients and their families, and to forge a model of collaboration in biomedical research.