

Memory

Memory is almost always affected to some degree after a brain injury. A very common problem is related to a person's recent memory. **Recent memory** is a type of memory which focuses on remembering something that occurred in the last few minutes/hours. It can also be described as memory related to "new learning since the brain injury." Some examples of this include difficulty remembering recent things or how to perform a task learned an hour ago. Often, new activities related to the injury, such as using a catheter or special bathroom equipment, can be difficult to remember.

Memories from a long time ago such as from childhood are almost always preserved. This type of memory is referred to as **remote** memory and refers to information that occurred before the brain injury.

Ways to Help

Provide structure to each and every day.

- Do the same things at the same time each day. Create routines to avoid having to remember what to do next.
- Place a schedule in appropriate rooms - use step-by-step instructions in the schedule, if necessary.
- For example, in the bathroom, place a list on the mirror with reminders to brush teeth, take a shower, wash hair, style hair, get dressed, etc.

Place a schedule as above in the kitchen.

- The schedule may include making breakfast, turning off the coffee pot, washing the dishes, taking medicines, etc.
- Keep a memory book/calendar to remember appointments, important phone calls and emergency contacts with phone numbers.

Rest Times

Encourage quiet times during the day, especially when needing to think or plan for the next day. This will cut down on distractions.

Write notes to yourself or have others write notes for you about things to remember later.

For example, you may want to ask your doctor something at your next doctor appointment on the 23rd. Write down your question on that date (the 23rd) in your planner so on the day you go to the doctor, the question will be there right in front of you when you need it.

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Don't over stress yourself.

- Rest when needed. You are learning to think and remember all over again. It is hard work and often a mental rest is needed.
- Allow others to help you plan. Accept help from your friends and loved ones.
- Play games like "Memory," card games, jigsaw puzzles etc. Let learning be fun. Do so in moderation.