

## Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI)

Taken from a Practice Guideline of the American Academy of Neurology

### Overview

- MCI is a medical condition that is common with aging.
- It is linked to problems with thinking ability and memory.
- There is strong evidence that MCI can lead to dementia. But for some people, MCI is temporary or does not get worse.
- There are no medicines shown to help treat MCI.
- Regular physical and cognitive exercise may help.

### Who Should Get Checked for MCI

Some people with MCI have thinking problems. Others have trouble with both thinking and memory. Get checked for MCI if your thinking has changed over the past 6 months:

- You are forgetful
- Forgetting things bothers you
- Forgetting keeps happening or is becoming a pattern
- Others also notice you are forgetful
- You have a hard time making decisions
- You struggle with completing the steps of complex tasks
- You have difficulty understanding information you see or read

### Checking for MCI

- A doctor's examination to check for neurological disease.
- A validated cognitive assessment test is needed. Your own assessment of your memory is not enough.

- You may need to have repeated tests over time to see how your cognitive function changes.

### Causes of MCI

- MCI can develop into dementia within 3 years in 20% of people
- MCI may be caused by sleep apnea, past head trauma, anxiety, and depression.
- MCI may be caused by medication side effects.

### MCI Compared with Dementia

- MCI is not the same as dementia. People with MCI have milder problems with thinking ability and memory. For someone with dementia, basic daily tasks, such as dressing, bathing, and eating, can become difficult. These are the tasks that allow you to live independently.
- With MCI, more complex tasks may be affected, such as how to make decisions. However, the effect on everyday functioning is much less than with dementia.

### Treating MCI

- There are no medicines shown to help treat MCI.
- Regular physical exercise may slow the condition or keep it from getting worse.
- Brain exercises may help
- Yearly medical exam for signs or symptoms of dementia.
- MCI is not linked to disability.
- Sometimes, MCI is temporary. For example, you can stop taking a medicine if it is causing your MCI.

To read the full guideline, visit [AAN.com/guidelines](https://www.aan.com/guidelines).