

Preparing for a Wellness Visit or Physical

Your yearly physical exam or wellness visit is an important chance to check on your brain health and talk about any memory changes you may have noticed. There are ways to plan ahead to make sure your brain health is addressed during this visit.

You Can Take Action

Follow these steps to get the most out of your next physical exam or wellness visit, especially if you're having concerns about your memory or cognitive decline:^{1,2,3,4}

Be ready to talk about any memory changes.

If you've noticed any changes to your memory, make sure to raise them during your wellness visit. This is especially important if the changes are making daily activities like cooking, shopping, driving, or paying your bills more difficult. If you have questions about brain health, it's a great idea to write them down before your visit.

Take memory or cognitive tests. If you've noticed recent memory loss or even if you're just aging normally, your doctor might give you tests to evaluate your brain health. These cognitive tests often include a series of questions or activities to check your attention, focus, problem-solving, counting, or language. Being given these tests is completely normal and is often just a precaution. So, don't worry and just give the best answers you can.

Follow through with further tests or referrals.

During your visit, your doctor might order additional medical tests, such as blood and urine tests, brain imaging scans, or PET scans. Or, they might also refer you to a specialist, like a neurologist or a geriatric psychiatrist.

Make sure you always complete any tests and referrals ordered by your doctor. This will keep things moving along and make sure nothing falls through the cracks in getting you the best treatment possible.

Check in regularly on chronic conditions.

If you have any chronic conditions like diabetes or high blood pressure, you will likely need to see your doctor more than once a year. This is not just important for your overall health, it's also an essential part of protecting your brain health and reducing your risk of cognitive decline.

1. <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/how-alzheimers-disease-diagnosed>

2. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/9164-alzheimers-disease/diagnosis-and-tests>

3. <https://alzfdn.org/memory-screening/what-is-memory-screening/>