

# CDC—Caregiving

SEPTEMBER 3, 2024

## Fast Facts: Memory Loss Among Caregivers

### KEY POINTS

- Many unpaid caregivers have or are at risk of worsening memory loss, which can be an early sign of dementia.
- Caregivers can make healthy lifestyle choices to reduce their risk of memory loss.



### Importance of caregivers

Millions of adults rely on unpaid caregivers to stay independent.

- As the population ages, more family and friends are likely become caregivers. [1]Among caregivers of adults 50 and older:
- About 6 in 10 help with household tasks, like getting dressed or bathing.
- Nearly all help with at least one critical activity of daily living, like transportation or managing finances.

### Memory loss in caregivers

A [CDC study](#) found that about 1 in 8 unpaid caregivers who are 45 or older experience worsening confusion or memory loss.

- Memory loss was more common in caregivers than noncaregivers.
- Caregivers between ages 45 and 64 were more likely to report worsening memory loss than noncaregivers of the same age group.[2]

Caregivers with worsening memory loss often have at least one chronic health condition, putting them at risk of needing care themselves.

Memory loss can affect a caregiver's ability to care for themselves, as well as their loved ones.

- Memory loss can affect the quality of their caregiving, which often requires clear thinking.

### **Reducing the risk of memory loss**

Caregivers can reduce their risk for memory loss by making positive lifestyle choices:

- [Seeing a doctor regularly.](#)
- [Being physically active.](#)
- [Eating healthy meals.](#)
- [Getting enough sleep.](#)
- [Drinking less alcohol or choosing not to drink.](#)
- [Not smoking.](#)

To avoid extra stress, caregivers should make these changes gradually. It's also important for caregivers to talk to a health care provider if they notice changes in their memory.

- Health care providers can help identify potentially reversible or treatable causes or detect dementia early to reduce the impact of the disease.

### **Resources**

- [Caregivers of a Person with Alzheimer's Disease or a Related Dementia](#)
- [Public Health Center of Excellence on Dementia Caregiving](#)
- [Reducing Risk for Dementia](#)