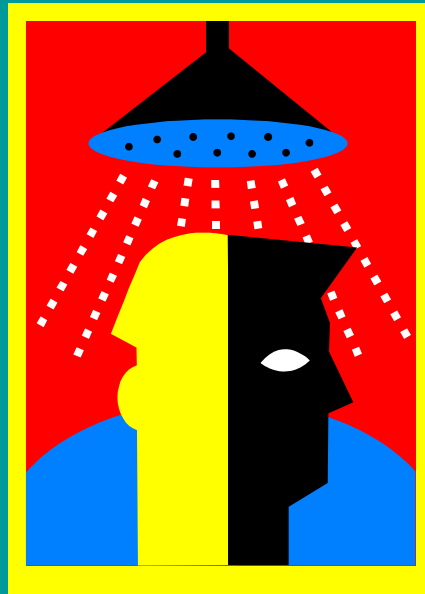


# Age-Related Memory Problems

Should I Be Worried?



# What's Happening...?"

- ◆ Information processing is harder
- ◆ Recall is slower
- ◆ Learning new things takes longer
- ◆ Distractions are more intrusive

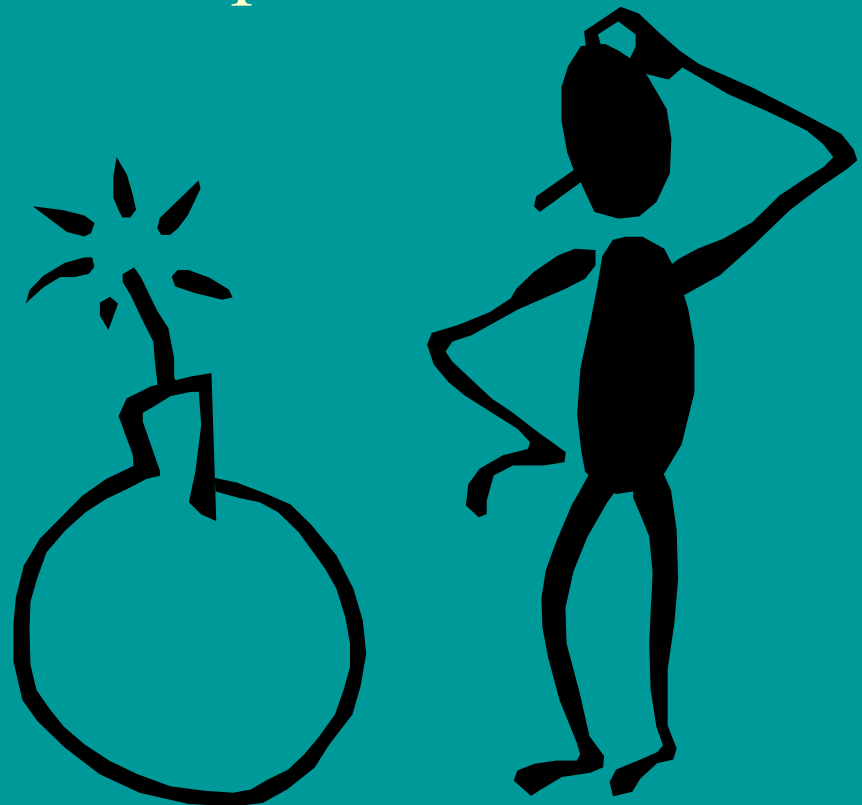
# Is What's Happening Normal?

- ◆ A certain amount of forgetfulness comes with age



# It takes longer to remember things in later years

Especially if you are under pressure...



# Factors That Affect Memory

- ◆ Fatigue
- ◆ Grief
- ◆ Depression



# Illness Affects Memory

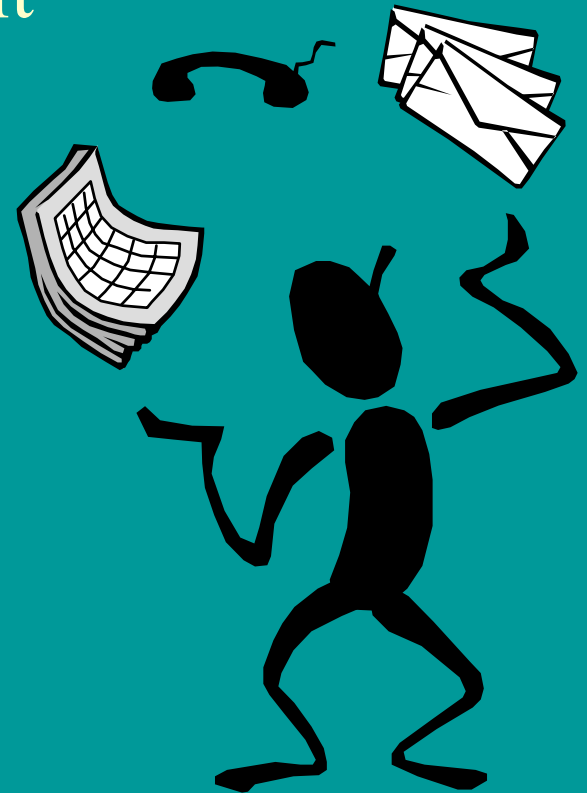
## Examples:

- ◆ Hypertension
- ◆ Sensory Impairments
- ◆ Thyroid dysfunction



# Information Overload Affects Memory

- ◆ Multi-tasking is more difficult
- ◆ A sense of “lost control” or ‘helplessness’ compounds memory difficulties



# Medications and Drugs are a Critical Factor in Memory Loss



- ◆ Prescription medications
- ◆ Over the counter medications
- ◆ Complementary/ Alternative medications

# Alcohol and Smoking Affect Memory



- ◆ **Alcohol:** chronic heavy consumption interferes with memory function (but moderate consumption provides less risk than not drinking at all)
- ◆ **Smoking:** smokers over 65 have 3.7 times greater risk of memory decline



# Poor Nutrition Can Be a Factor in Memory Loss

Consider:

- ◆ Less saturated fat, high carbohydrate food
- ◆ More vegetables and whole grains
- ◆ Daily Vitamin supplement with folate
- ◆ Supplements of Vitamin E

*Source: Nutrition: Concepts and Controversies, 8th edition*



# Not Paying Attention Affects Memory...



- ◆ ‘Concentrate on concentrating’
- ◆ Focus/use all senses
- ◆ Screen out distractions
- ◆ Avoid interruptions
- ◆ Test your memory periodically

Read through this list of items just once...concentrate on each word

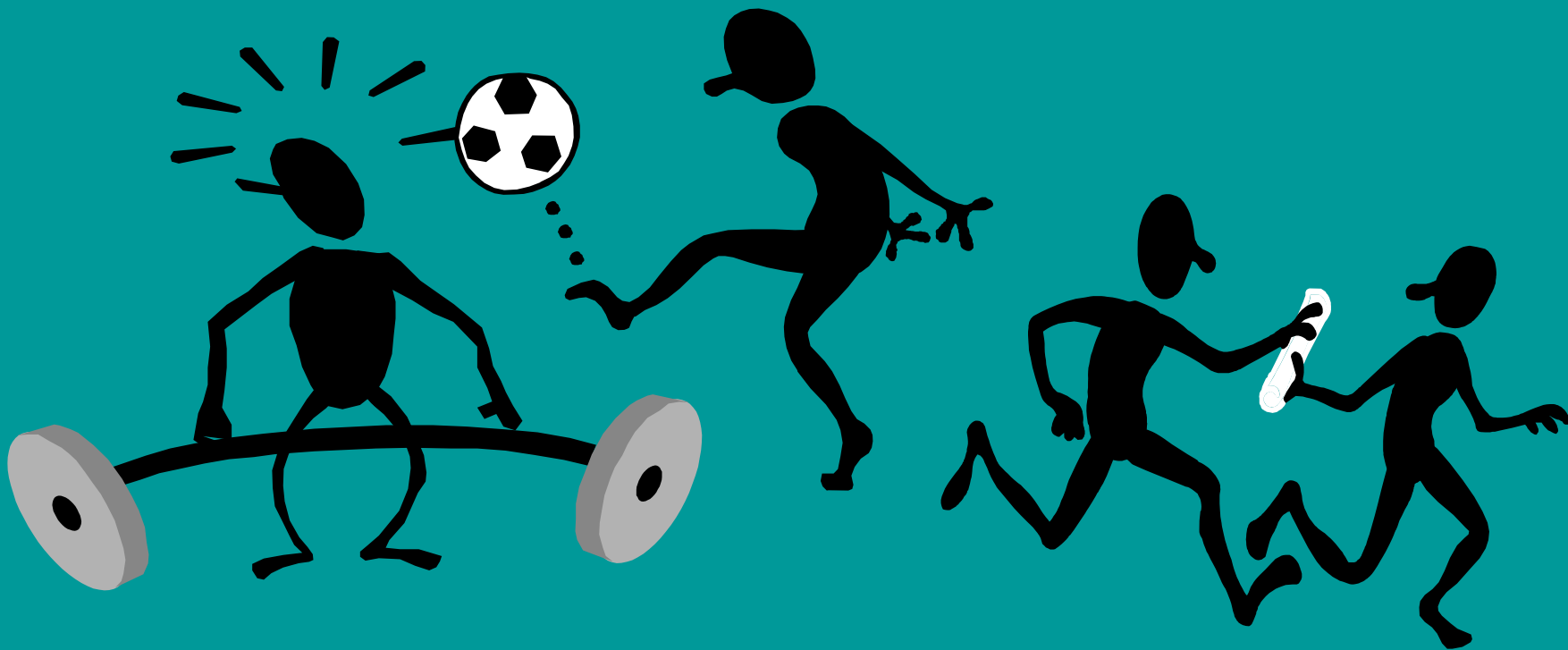
## Memory Matching Test

- |                |             |          |
|----------------|-------------|----------|
| ◆ Onions       | Shrimp      | Mangoes  |
| ◆ Plums        | Tonic Water | Pasta    |
| ◆ Eggs         | Mayonnaise  | Ham      |
| ◆ Blackberries | Basil       | Brownies |
| ◆ Hazelnuts    | Zucchini    | Oatmeal  |

Source: Memory Assessment Clinic, Bethesda, Maryland

# Lack of Physical Activity Affects Memory

- ◆ One option: 20-30minutes/day of walking



# Lack of Mental Stimulation and Isolation Affect Memory



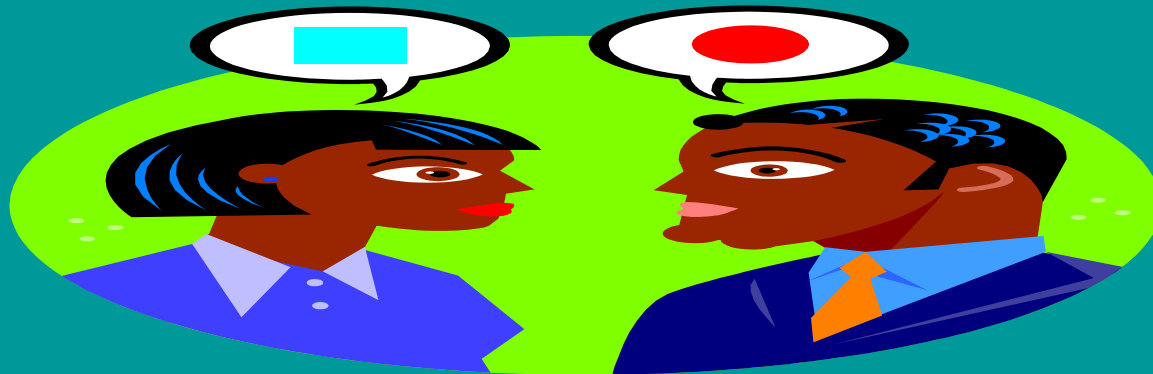
Stay mentally  
active

Critical links:

- ◆ Social  
connectedness
- ◆ Social networks

# When is Memory Loss a Significant Problem?

You do not remember what you  
forgot...



# When is Memory Loss a Significant Problem?

It Impacts Your Lifestyle



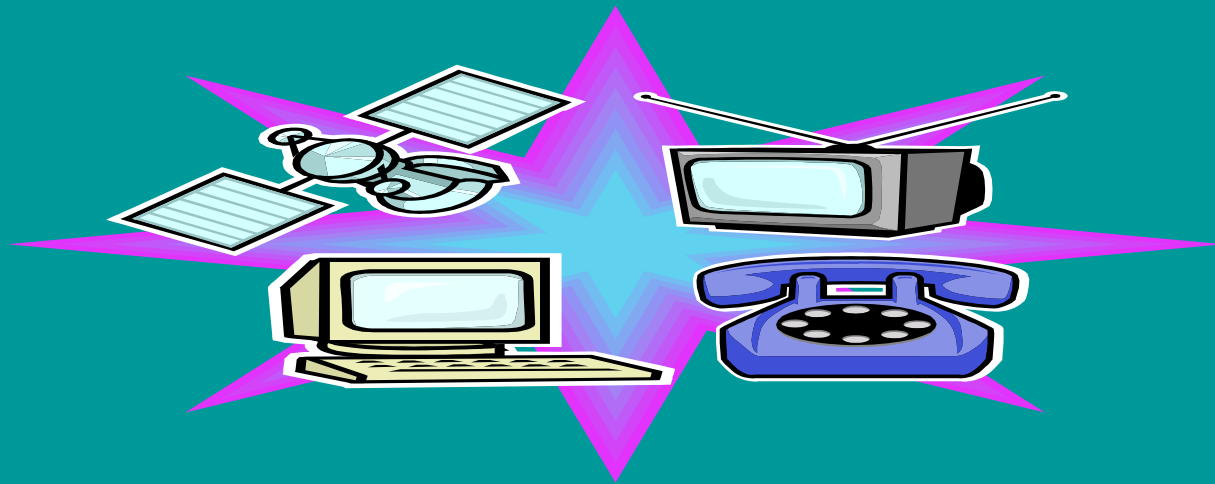
# When is Memory Loss a Significant Problem?

- ◆ Constructing new memories is difficult



# When is Memory Loss a Significant Problem?

- ◆ Operating common appliances is difficult



# Age Related Memory Loss... or Dementia?

- ◆ Ask: “Are all the possible causes considered and addressed?”
- ◆ Ask: “Does memory loss substantially interfere with daily functioning?”
- ◆ Ask: “Are family members and friends concerned?”

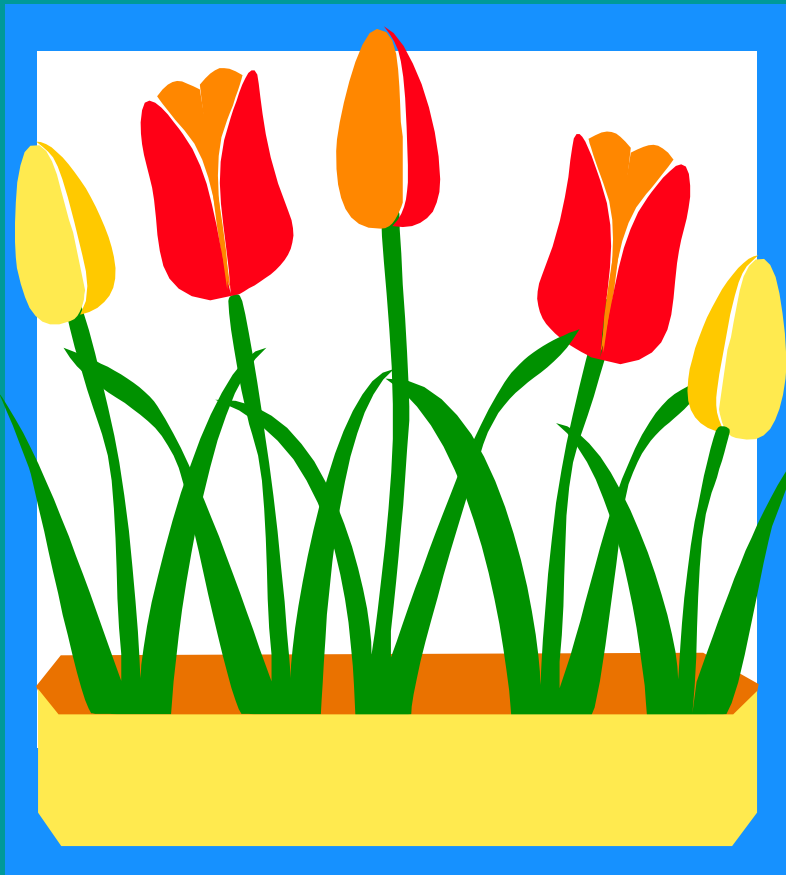
# So What Can You Do About Memory Problems?

- ◆ Look for a cause...address it
  - Example: Be alert to sleep, nutritional needs
- ◆ Focus on what you want to remember
  - Example: Use eye contact, touch, repetition
- ◆ Stay mentally active:
  - Your brain is a muscle; use it
- ◆ Use memory aids

# Memory Aids include...

- ◆ Calendars, day planners,
- ◆ Book of days
- ◆ Sticky note reminders (in strategic places)
- ◆ Household cues (outgoing mail placed near car keys)
- ◆ “To-do lists”
- ◆ Electronic reminders
- ◆ Labeling, color coding
- ◆ Imagery
- ◆ Exaggeration
- ◆ Repetition

# Memory Aids....



- ◆ Use a “memory road map” to grow your memory
- ◆ Deal with factors that are in your control

# The Road Map to Managing Memory Impairment

- ◆ Start with relaxation/deep breathing
- ◆ Take a moment to ask yourself: “What am I doing? “What do I need?”
- ◆ Make the connection; focus on being mentally active
- ◆ Maximize your use of memory aids
- ◆ Toss chaos; stay organized
- ◆ Make conscious choices about what you want to remember

# Memory Loss: A Summary

- ◆ Age-associated memory impairment is a natural part of aging
- ◆ Always consider the possibility that memory loss is reversible
- ◆ Ways to manage memory loss abound—many are simple and easy to initiate