



iSalud SOL!

HCHS/SOL Newsletter

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Hispanic Community Health Study / Study of Latinos (HCHS/SOL)

Let's keep a healthy brain!

The human brain is a specialized organ that is responsible for all thought and movement that the body produces. Each part of the brain has a unique function that allows humans to observe and interact with their environment effectively. A healthy brain is one that can perform all its functions; among others the mental processes that are collectively known as cognition, including the ability to learn new things, intuition, judgment, language, and remembering. Cognitive health is a major factor in ensuring the quality of life of older adults and preserving their independence. The overall term that describes a wide range of symptoms associated with a decline in memory or other thinking skills is known as dementia. It may be severe enough to reduce a person's ability to perform everyday activities. However, dementia is not a specific disease, nor is it limited to a specific age group. Alzheimer's disease accounts for 60 to 80 percent of such cognitive impairment cases. Vascular dementia, which occurs after a stroke, is the second most common dementia type. However, there are many other conditions that can cause symptoms of dementia, including some that are reversible, such as thyroid problems and vitamin deficiencies.

A few common signs of cognitive impairment include the following:

- Memory loss
- Frequently asking the same question or repeating the same story over and over
- Not recognizing familiar people and places
- Having trouble exercising judgment, such as knowing what to do in an emergency
- Changes in mood or behavior
- Difficulty planning and carrying out tasks, such as following a recipe or keeping track of monthly bills



If you're worried about your memory and notice these signs in yourself or someone you know, don't ignore them. Schedule an appointment with your doctor. It's important to find out what is causing your memory problems. With early detection, you can get the maximum benefits from available treatments. You can explore treatments that may provide some relief of the symptoms and help you maintain a level of independence longer. You can help protect your brain with some of the same strategies that protect your heart – don't smoke; take steps to keep your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar within recommended limits; and maintain a healthy weight. Some risk factors for cognitive decline, such as age and genetics cannot be changed but researchers continue to explore the impact of other risk factors on brain health and prevention of dementia.

Sources: <http://www.cdc.gov> <http://www.alz.org>

New Ancillary Study! SOL-INCA

SOL-INCA is an ancillary study to find out more about the cognitive status of the Hispanic/Latinos in the United States. If you are a HCHS/SOL participant **52 years old** or older you might be eligible to participate.

Contact us to find out more by calling
718. 584.1563

Other Resources

[The Alzheimer's Association's 24/7 Helpline](#) provides information and support to people with memory loss, caregivers, health care professionals, and the public at 1-800-272-3900.

[NIH's Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral Center](#) can be contacted Monday to Friday via phone at 1-800-438-4380 or via email at adear@nia.nih.gov.

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