

This is How YOUR BRAIN AGES

It's no surprise that our brains change as we age; however, new studies report that mental decline may start around age 45 -- earlier than was previously believed. While the brain goes through several significant changes as it gets older, it's not all bad news. Plus, there are several things you can do to make sure your brain stays healthy.

Timeline

Gestation



Since the brain begins to grow four weeks after conception, it needs a healthy prenatal environment to develop properly.



At certain times during brain development, **250,000** neurons are added each minute.



A shortened gestation period can lead to brain development disruptions, which may contribute to behavioral and psychological problems later on.

Childhood



2x

The brain produces twice the number of neurons it will need, and only those that are reinforced with use will remain.



At this point in time, the brain is as energetic and flexible as it will be.



By age 6, a brain is 95% of its adult weight.

Adolescence



Some say our brains begin to age as early as puberty.



The brain is fully grown; however, the "wiring" is still a work in progress.



This time of life brings "waves of gray-matter pruning," which means teens lose about 1% of their gray matter every year until they hit their early 20s.

Adulthood



The peak of your brain power comes around age 22 and lasts for only five years.

What starts to decline? The abilities to plan and recall events, as well as task coordination.



By age 45-49, men and women suffer a **3.6%** loss, and the brain's capacity for memory, reasoning and comprehension begins to wane.



Between 20 & 90, the brain loses an average **5-10%** of its weight.

The grooves on the brain's surface widen.



The brain reaches adulthood when you're in your 20s.

Old Age

By age 80, our brains have lost a little weight and have shrunk by a few ounces; most of the weight lost is water.



The shrinkage of the brain usually leads to worsened cognitive abilities, including inductive reasoning, spatial orientation and verbal memory. When the hippocampus begins to shrink, there's a loss of orientation and wandering, which many elderly people experience.

At this point we're steadily losing brain cells.



Decayed portions of dendrites that extend from neurons increase.



By age 65-70, men will suffer a loss of **9.6%**, and women will suffer a **7.4%** loss.

However, it's not all bad. Emotional responses can be kept under control thanks to the amygdala interacting more with a section of the brain that controls emotions.



Our brains essentially dry out as we age. Drinking more water will not help prevent that, and living in a dry climate won't increase the amount your brain shrinks.

Factors that may impact brain aging



Education

Constantly learn and keep your brain active.



Exercise

Walk rapidly for 45 minutes three times a week.



Rest

Sleeping eight hours a night may help prevent memory loss.



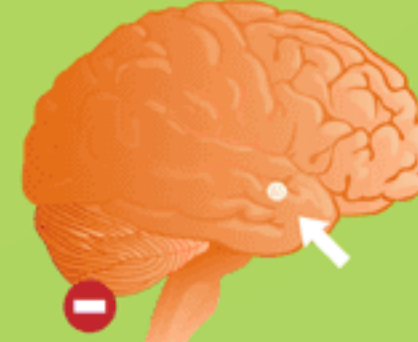
General health

Eat a balanced diet, don't smoke and maintain healthy blood pressure and cholesterol levels.



Hypertension

Speeds up normal brain shrinkage and loss of mental abilities.



Stress

Leads to the release of a hormone that in large amounts wears away the neurons in the hippocampus.

Sources: newscientist.com | mcckc.edu | psychologytoday.com | dailymail.co.uk | martinfrost.ws | usc.edu
Information provided by: <http://www.term LIFE insurance.org>

