

# Battling the aging brain



**Humana**

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 **North Carolina State Health Plan**  
FOR TEACHERS AND STATE EMPLOYEES  
A Division of the Department of State Treasurer

 *Yale T. Folwell, CPA*  
STATE TREASURER OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DALE R. FOLWELL, CPA





My name is Lisa Nannini.

I am a Consumer Engagement Professional at Humana.

This presentation was developed by Humana in consultation with clinical staff.

If you have questions today, please direct them to your healthcare provider.



## Things to remember

- The things we talk about today don't replace professional healthcare; for medical guidance, talk to your doctor.
- Consult your doctor before beginning any new exercise or dietary regimen.

This information is provided for educational purposes only. It is not to be used for medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Consult your doctor if you have questions or concerns. Consult your doctor before beginning any new diet or exercise regimen.

# Agenda

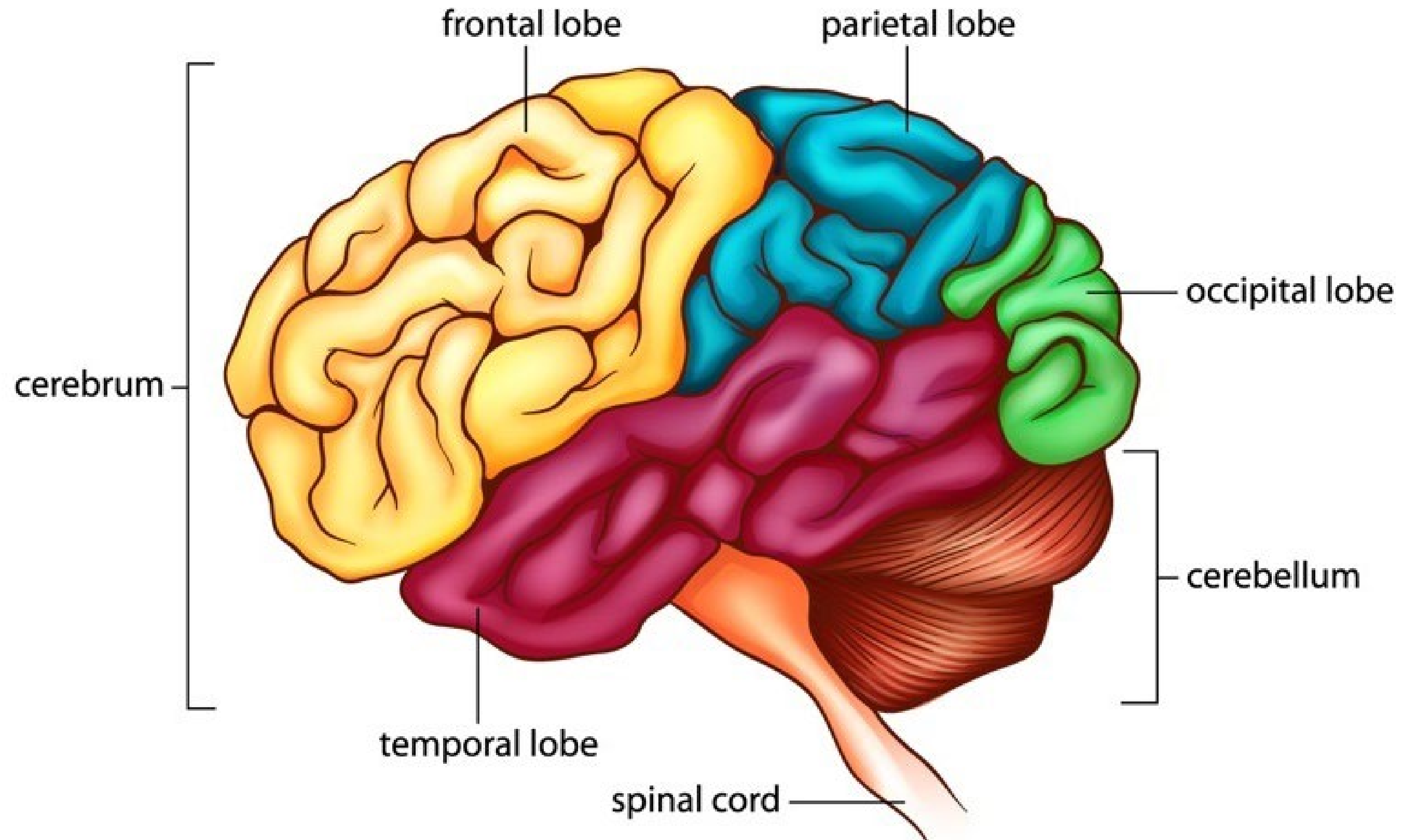
- 01 | All about the brain
- 02 | How the brain changes as you age
- 03 | Tips to help keep your brain healthy
- 04 | How to use memory aids

# Parts of the brain

**The brain is your body's control center and it controls all human activity.**

It's responsible for your thoughts, feelings, emotions and behavior.

It is made up of several different parts that all work together.







## The aging brain: What's normal?

Brain changes of any kind may be scary, but some changes are a normal part of aging.

### **Normal age-related changes include:**

- Small declines in memory
- Slower processing speed
- Increased reaction time
- Decrease in speed of learning
- Difficulty doing more than one task at a time and ignoring distractions

# The aging brain: What's not normal?

Dementia is a decline in one's ability to think and remember that is so severe that it affects a person's daily life.

## **Symptoms of dementia may include:**

- Being unable to remember recent events
- Forgetting how to use common objects or words
- Getting lost in familiar locations
- Being unable to follow directions
- Neglecting safety, hygiene, and nutrition
- Decline in the ability to socialize



# Tips to help keep your brain healthy





# Medication Adherence

**Taking your medicine regularly as prescribed is known as medication adherence.**

- Medication adherence can help you manage your conditions and reduce the risk of complications.

**For Diabetes, High Blood Pressure, and High Cholesterol:**

- New research showed that increasing the days of missed medication was *related to a higher risk* of **Alzheimer's Disease, Dementia, and other Cognitive Decline related conditions**. For example, people who regularly missed doses had:
  - **27% to 148%** increased risk of **Alzheimer's Disease**
  - **33% to 105%** increased risk of **Dementia**.

**Tips to Remember Taking Medications Include:**

- Digital health-related applications
- Plastic pill box organizers or dispensing systems
- Medication placement or pairing with a daily routine
- Alarm(s) to take medication(s) at the same time daily
- Auto Refill Programs
- 90-day supplies





# Train your brain

Challenging your mind may have short and long-term benefits for your brain, helping reduce your risk of dementia.

## Here's what you need to know:

- Try a variety of puzzles to train different parts of your brain.
- Learn new things and take on new challenges and projects.
- Break out of your routine and do things differently than you normally do.







## Stay physically active

Exercise may play a role in decreasing your risk of cognitive decline and help keep your brain healthy.

It may also help increase blood flow to your brain.

**How much is enough?** Aim to get about 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week.

**Note:** Talk to your healthcare provider before beginning an exercise program.



## Eat brain-friendly foods

Following the Mediterranean diet may help reduce your risk of dementia.

### **Here's what you need to know about the Mediterranean diet:**

- It focuses on fruits, vegetables, nuts, fish and whole grains.
- It promotes using healthy fats instead of unhealthy fats.
- It limits red meat, salt, butter and margarine.
- It encourages fish and poultry.





## Connect with others



**How does being social help keep your brain healthy?** Staying socially active may help support brain health and possibly delay the onset of dementia. It may also reduce your risk for depression.



**Find ways to stay connected with others.** Ideas include: volunteering, joining a club, taking a class, giving a friend a call, meeting someone for coffee, or playing a game with other people.



**If being social doesn't come naturally...** Set a goal to do one activity each day that allows you to talk to other people.





## Get enough sleep

Your brain needs regular, high-quality sleep to function at its best.

**Why?** A lack of sleep makes it difficult to think clearly, solve problems, and store and recall memories.

### **Follow these tips to help improve sleep:**

- Get on a good schedule.
- Create calming bedtime rituals.
- Keep naps short and early.



## Using memory aids

Remember, some memory loss is common as you age.

**There are a few things that may help you make the most of the memory you have left, including:**

- Keeping a to-do list that documents your priorities.
- Creating a routine for important things so you don't forget.
- Getting creative when learning new things and making memories.





Let's review!





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Thank you for  
attending our class

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