Our brains age like the rest of our body. Some small changes in memory are normal.

There are things we can do to keep our brains healthy like exercising and quitting smoking.

If changes in your memory or ability to think start impacting your life, visit a doctor and explain what is happening.

For persons age 65 and older who have Medicare, the Medicare Annual Wellness Visit is a yearly opportunity to discuss any changes in your memory or ability to think with your doctor.

Sometimes changes in memory and thinking can be a symptom of medical conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, a type of dementia.

If dementia is suspected, an early diagnosis is very important so that you or your family can get the medical care and help needed.

There are Memory Assessment Centers across Virginia where you or a loved one can receive a diagnosis and treatment.

Recent Medicare changes allow clinicians to get reimbursed for helping patients with a new dementia diagnosis develop a detailed plan of care.

Doctors and patients should discuss brain health at every stage of life and especially after the age of 65.

Discussions about brain health are very important for African Americans and Hispanics due to a higher risk of dementia later in life.