



Mild Cognitive Impairment Fact Sheet

Boston University Alzheimer's Disease Center



What is mild cognitive impairment (MCI)?

- **MCI** is a condition in which a person notices problems with memory, language, or other cognitive (thinking) abilities. These problems typically do not interfere with daily life.
- In some cases, **MCI** may be a very early stage of Alzheimer's disease or another dementia.
- A diagnosis of **MCI** can be made after a memory evaluation. The evaluation includes a complete medical history interview and paper and pencil tests of cognitive abilities.

How likely is it that a person diagnosed with MCI will develop dementia?

- People with **MCI** are more likely than those without **MCI** to develop Alzheimer's disease or another dementia within their lifetime.
- For example, approximately one out of ten people diagnosed with **MCI** show a greater decline in cognitive abilities within one year of their diagnosis.

Does everyone with MCI eventually develop dementia?

- No, not everyone with **MCI** will develop Alzheimer's disease or dementia
- One out of five people diagnosed with **MCI** will go back to normal cognitive functioning within three or four years of their **MCI** diagnosis.
- Many people with **MCI** remain stable for several years without progressing to Alzheimer's disease or dementia.

What causes MCI?

- There is no known cause of **MCI**; however, risk factors include:
 - High blood pressure
 - Diabetes
 - Low levels of physical, social, and mental activity
- Good ways to maintain brain health include:
 - Good medical management of heart disease (such as high blood pressure and diabetes)
 - Regular exercise
 - Increased social and mental activity

If you have more questions about **MCI**, please contact **Eric Steinberg** (617-638-5368 or egstein@bu.edu) at the Boston University Alzheimer's Disease Center.