

# Amnesia



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Amnesia is a disruption of a person's memory, ranging from slight to total memory loss. Amnesia can come from a variety of sources. The causes vary from: alcoholism, trauma to the head, lack of oxygen (hypoxia), Parkinson's, and common age related issues such as Alzheimer's. Amnesia caused by head injuries is the most commonly recognized form; it is the main cause of retrograde and anterograde amnesia. Retrograde amnesia, is memory loss for events that occurred before an event, the event mostly commonly being head injuries.

Anterograde amnesia is when an individual can no longer retain memories after such an event. Lack of oxygen damages brain cells heavily, and due to an inability to regenerate, permanent memory loss may occur, depending on the severity of damage. Alcohol disrupts brain cells, specifically cells of the hippocampus. Because the hippocampus is responsible for long-term and short-term memory, extreme consumptions of alcohol over a long period can cause degradation. Parkinson's disease is a known factor for causing memory loss because of its slow destruction of dopamine in the brain.

Dopamine is used by nerve cells to send messages; without it memory loss may occur when certain parts of the brain are affected. Alzheimer's affects the brain as a form of dementia and progressively worsens, creating confusion and disorientation in the mind, plaguing it until the point of difficult or impossible recollection of past events. Amnesia occurring from alcohol has been shown to be more prevalent in poorer neighborhoods, or in people with PTSD, as excessive consumption is more common in such areas.

Head trauma is sporadic and has no specific pattern of occurrence because most cases are accidental. Parkinson's has been attributed to more commonly occur in people over the age of 50. Parkinson's is more likely in those who use drugs or alcohol because both decrease dopamine levels in the brain. Alzheimer's is also more prevalent in older individuals, however symptoms appear much later. The majority of those with Alzheimer's are over 65. Only about 5% of people get Alzheimer's in their 40's or 50's and is termed early onset Alzheimer's.