According to a 2013 study, researchers at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston asked 200 healthy volunteers to report concerns about their own memory and then received a brain scan looking for buildup of amyloid plaque, a risk factor for Alzheimer's disease. The most anxious about their memory also had the highest levels of plaque.

**Keywords**

Alzheimer's Disease, Alzheimer's, Research, Brain, Behavior, Doctor, Health, Wellness, Mayo Clinic, Study, Treatment, Memory, Loss, Risk, Factor, Outcome, Disease, Concern, Findings, Drug Trials, Forget, Details, Signs, Warning, Remember, Subjective Cognitive Decline, Pattern, Testing, Scan, Improve, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Forgetfulness, Aging

**Citation**

"Memory Loss Worries May Indicate Alzheimer’s Risk." Nancy Snyderman, correspondent. *NBC Nightly*
Transcript

Memory Loss Worries May Indicate Alzheimer’s Risk

BRIAN WILLIAMS, anchor:
We are back as promised with a special look tonight at the warning signs for Alzheimer-- Alzheimer’s, what to worry about and what not to worry about, what’s normal brain behavior and forgetfulness, and what should raise a flag. Doctors now know more about the difference and they are better able to start treatment. Our report from our Chief Medical Editor Doctor Nancy Snyderman.

WOMAN: To make this design for me.

DOCTOR NANCY SNYDERMAN, reporting:
At the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, 63 year-old architect David Cane is healthy and volunteering in a study that could help find a treatment for Alzheimer’s.

WOMAN: Begin.

DR. SNYDERMAN: By targeting the disease at its earliest stages.

DOCTOR RON PETERSEN (Mayo Clinic Neurologist): We give medications to people, improves their memory a little bit and improves their social interaction abilities a bit, but it really doesn’t alter the long-term outcome of the disease.

DR. SNYDERMAN: To figure out what’s an early warning sign for Alzheimer’s versus normal memory loss, researchers at Brigham and Women’s Hospital asked 200 healthy volunteers, ages 65 to 87, to report concerns about their own memory. Each also got a brain scan, looking for buildup of amyloid plaque, a protein deposit associated with Alzheimer’s disease. It turns out those who were most anxious about their memory also had the highest levels of plaque, meaning people can likely sense when something is going wrong. Doctors are exploring this possible connection by tracking the group to see if any get the disease.

DOCTOR REBECCA AMARIGLIO (Brigham and Women’s Hospital): The implication of the-- these findings is that it will help to inform drug trials that are just getting under way.

DR. SNYDERMAN: Back in Minnesota, David and his wife Linda think their occasional forgetfulness isn’t anything serious.
LINDA: He doesn’t remember some of the family birthdays or anniversaries.
DAVID CANE: I don’t remember names as well as I did at one time.
DR. SNYDERMAN: Doctors say that type of memory loss is normal. So when should you be concerned? Here are the warning signs. For instance, getting lost in familiar surroundings, having trouble remembering important details from recent events, and difficulty recalling or following the plot of a TV program or book. The term is called subjective cognitive decline that belief you know something is wrong. It’s not misplacing these and wondering where the car keys are. It’s looking at them and thinking what did they go to? So not to alarm anyone tonight, but if you start to see a repetitive pattern that’s the time to talk to your physician because early recognition can be entry into early testing, Brian, and there are a lot of new promising drugs out there.
BRIAN WILLIAMS: So what about the conversations that happen between couples all over this country--
DR. SNYDERMAN: Yes.
WILLIAMS: --every day where you're saying, you know, the movie with the guy who was in it with the blonde girlfriend. She was in-- and people just go tangentially on. Is the standard, if it alarms you or your loved ones, it’s probably an alarming sign?
DR. SNYDERMAN: You know, this one has a normal part of that where you can’t remember people’s names and you can’t put things together, but if you start to see a daily pattern, there’s this disruption in life. Deep down inside, what this study shows is if it starts to bother you that’s when you have the conversation. And I’ve talked to a lot of people and said, well, I don’t want to know. The answer is, yes, you do want to know, because if you can make a difference by early drugs, you want access to those. And even more important, you want to get affairs in order. You want to make sure you’re legal and your financial and your medical house is in order. I don’t believe in putting your head in the sand and saying, oh, well, it’s not good for me. Knowing is a-- there's a lot-- there’s a lot of power in that.
WILLIAMS: All of it very helpful stuff. Nancy, thank you, as always.
DR. SNYDERMAN: You bet, Brian.