

# factsheet

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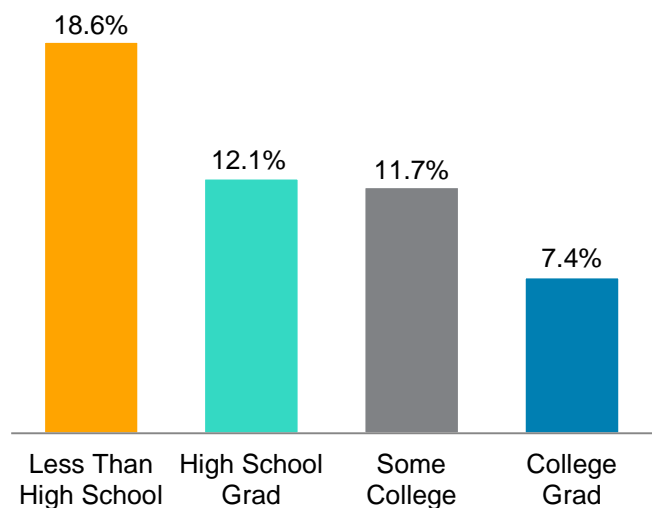
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## Cognitive Data from the 2015 BRFSS

**One in nine people aged 45 and older report facing confusion or memory loss that is happening more often or is getting worse (“subjective cognitive decline”).**

- Data from 33 states and the District of Columbia show that 11.6 percent of Americans aged 45 and over have subjective cognitive decline.
- African Americans are 21 percent more likely than whites to have subjective cognitive decline.
- Individuals with lower levels of education are more likely to have subjective cognitive decline. Of those who did not graduate from high school, 18.6 percent have subjective cognitive decline compared with 7.4 percent of college graduates.
- Among those with subjective cognitive decline, 29.2 percent live alone, and 24.2 percent have a household income of less than \$15,000.

**Subjective Cognitive Decline Among Those Aged 45 and Over By Education Level**



**People with subjective cognitive decline often have additional health issues beyond their increasing memory problems.**

- Eighty percent of those with subjective cognitive decline have at least one other chronic condition (arthritis, asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, COPD, and/or diabetes).
- Over half say that, in general, they are in fair or poor health.
- Of those individuals with subjective cognitive decline, 39.4 percent spent at least 14 days in the last month in poor physical health.

### What is the BRFSS?

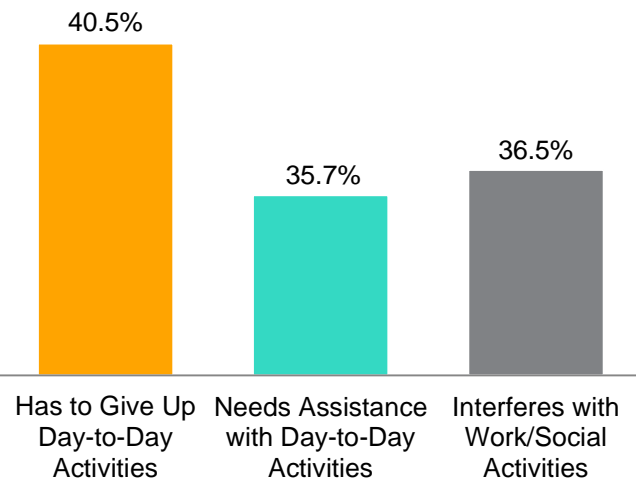
The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is a public health survey conducted each year by all states, in coordination with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The data presented here come from the 2015 BRFSS Cognitive Module – a series of six questions that ask about memory problems, the burden of cognitive decline, and whether memory problems have been discussed with a health care professional. All data were analyzed by the CDC’s Healthy Aging Program.

## For a large proportion of those with subjective cognitive decline, it negatively affects their ability to function.

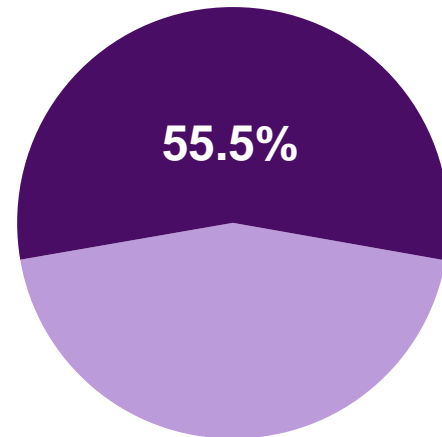
- Due to their memory problems, over 40 percent of adults aged 45 and older with subjective cognitive decline report they had to give up day-to-day activities such as cooking, cleaning, or paying bills. And, 35.7 percent say they needed assistance because of their memory problems.
- More than one in three adults say their worsening memory problems interfered with their ability to work, volunteer, or engage socially.
- Taken together, over half of adults with subjective cognitive decline say that it creates “functional difficulties” – that is, their memory problems disrupt everyday tasks or interfere with work or social activities.

## Percent with Subjective Cognitive Decline Who Say It Creates Difficulties



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## Percent with Subjective Cognitive Decline Who Have Not Talked to a Health Care Provider



## Most are not talking about their memory problems with a health care professional.

- Of those aged 45 and older with subjective cognitive decline, over half have not talked to a health care provider about it.
- Even among those whose memory problems are creating functional difficulties, 42.3 percent have not talked to a health care provider.

## What Is “Subjective Cognitive Decline”?

“Subjective cognitive decline” refers to those who report that, in the previous 12 months, they have experienced confusion or memory loss that is happening more often or is getting worse. While some of these individuals may have mild cognitive impairment (MCI) or be in the early stages of Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias, “subjective cognitive decline” does not measure the prevalence of any medical condition. Rather, it measures the prevalence of those who self-report they are having increasing memory problems. A growing body of evidence shows that subjective cognitive decline is one of the earliest warning signs of Alzheimer’s and other dementias and indicates a higher risk of developing the disease.