

Some reasons behind brain fog



**YOUR
HEALTH**

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Q I am 26 years old and work at a computer all day. I find it difficult to remember things like where I kept my keys. I need to upskill and am having difficulty studying. Is it brain fog?

Brain fog is a non-specific symptom that can be caused by long hours in front of a computer, stress, inadequate sleep, anxiety, depression, lack of exercise, dehydration, and vitamin and mineral deficiencies. You could check for conditions such as anaemia, thyroid disorders, Vitamin B12 deficiency, diabetes and sleep apnoea.

Take short breaks from the computer every 30-45 minutes, exercise regularly, drink enough water and eat balanced meals with adequate protein, fruits and vegetables. Reduce multitasking and maintain a written schedule or set reminders for important tasks.

If the problem persists for more than a few weeks, worsens or interferes significantly with work and daily life, make sure you consult a physician for proper evaluation.

Under-eye bags

Q I have bags under my eyes. They make me look old and haggard.

Bags under the eyes may be caused by allergies, infections, smoking, lack of sleep or excess salt intake. They can also result from fluid retention due to underlying medical conditions or from overuse of cosmetic products.

Cold compresses can help constrict the blood vessels and reduce puffiness. Wrap ice cubes in a soft cloth or towel and place them gently under the eyes for a few minutes at a time. Make sure the ice is not applied directly to the skin.

Throat irritation

Q Whenever I lie down at night, I have a cough but no wheezing. I feel it happens because when I lie

down, mucus drips backwards into my throat and irritates it.

This is called a post-nasal drip. To reduce it, spray your nose twice daily with fluticasone, azelastine or ipratropium. Take a long-acting, non-sedating antihistamine such as cetirizine at night. Steam inhalation twice a day may also help. While sleeping, prop your head up on a pillow to reduce the backflow of mucus into your throat.

Leg cramps

Q I develop sudden, excruciating pain in one leg, which wakes me up at night. I am unable to stand.

The leg muscles alternately contract and relax to produce movement. A cramp is a sudden, involuntary and painful contraction of one of these muscles. It can last for several minutes and may even wake you from sleep with its intensity.

Cramps are often triggered by dehydration, excessive exercise or deficiencies in B-complex vitamins or minerals such as iron, magnesium and potassium. Certain medications, including diuretics for example, may also precipitate them.

To prevent cramps, stay well hydrated, especially in hot weather. Avoid excessive exertion and stretch your leg muscles regularly, particularly in the morning and before bedtime.



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Disappearing fibroids

Q I have suffered for many years from fibroids in my uterus that caused pain and heavy, irregular periods. I am now 60 years old and have attained menopause. An ultrasound scan recently showed, to my surprise, that the fibroids had disappeared. Was I misdiagnosed?

Fibroids are hormone-dependent growths. After menopause, oestrogen and progesterone levels fall and the uterus itself shrinks in size. As a result, fibroids often shrink considerably or may even disappear completely. You are lucky. In some people, the fibroids do not shrink, and though bleeding may not occur, they can cause pain and a feeling of heaviness in the lower abdomen. They may interfere with free urine flow.