As people age, they experience many different changes in the body. Some of these changes happen in a system known as the nervous system. Most of these changes are natural and should not cause significant memory loss or a loss of physical functioning.

Nerves (pictured) are the main workers within the nervous system. They are responsible for sending signals from the brain to other areas of the body in order to allow the body to react to something in its surroundings. Changes to these nerves can cause some reactions to become slower. Although the reactions are not as fast or as quick as they used to be, they are still there and can be as effective.

Nervous system changes are expected, but should not prevent normal functioning or cause memory loss.

When should I see a doctor?...

Nervous system changes should not cause a dramatic loss of ability to do simple tasks. You should see a physician if you experience:

- dizziness
- constant confusion
- noticeable changes in your memory
- difficulties in thinking or reasoning
- difficulties in doing everyday tasks like eating, bathing, or dressing

If you believe you have any of these symptoms, make an appointment to see a health care provider and tell him or her any difficulties you are going through. Do not assume these changes are natural. It is better to be safe.

Your Nervous System...

Although there is not a proven method for preventing change in the nervous system, many research studies have found that doing puzzles or having meaningful conversations with others can help save some nerve cell functions.