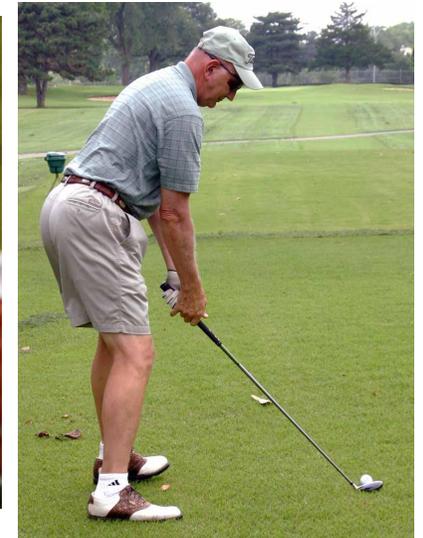


How to Keep Your Brain Healthy & Lower Risk of Cognitive Decline



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Information provided by World Health Organization (WHO), Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the National Institutes for Health (NIH) September, 2019

Aging and Health

Aging well depends on your:

- Lifestyle
- Environment
- Genes

Healthy lifestyle choices may help you maintain a healthy body and brain and may reduce your risk for cognitive decline.



What Can We Do to Protect Brain Health?





Diet & Nutrition: What's on your plate?

Fill ½ your plate with veggies & fruits



Pack ¼ of plate with protein

Give 1/4 of plate to whole grain foods



Make water your drink of choice

Source: <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/food-guide-snapshot>



Diet & Nutrition

USDA Top 20 Antioxidant Foods



Small Red Beans (dried)



Cranberries



Strawberries



Black Plums



Blueberries (wild)



Artichokes (cooked)



Red Delicious Apples



Russet Potatoes (cooked)



Red Kidney Beans (dried)



Blackberries



Granny Smith Apples



Black Beans (dried)



Pinto Beans



Prunes



Pecans



Plums



Blueberries (cultivated)



Raspberries



Sweet Cherries



Gala Apples



Physical Activity



How much physical activity are we getting?

Less than 1/4 of Americans hit the recommendations for physical activity.



Physical Activity



What the research shows:

- “Physically active people seem less likely to develop cognitive decline, vascular dementia and Alzheimer’s disease when compared with inactive people.”

Source: Gallaway et al., 2017; Hamer & Chida, 2009; Sofi et al., 2011; Stephen et al., 2017).



Physical Activity



Physical activity may also:

- Reduce risks of diabetes, heart disease, depression, and stroke
- Enhances immune system function
- Prevent falls
- Improve connections among brain cells

Source: Gallaway et al., 2017; Hamer & Chida, 2009; Sofi et al., 2011; Stephen et al., 2017).



Cognitive Stimulation

Do mentally stimulating activities:

- Read books and magazines
- Play games and puzzles
- Learn a new language
- Take or teach a class
- Learn to play a musical instrument
- Join a choir
- Take up quilting, knitting or drawing
- Learn digital photography
- Take a cooking class
- Work or volunteer





Sleep & Relaxation

Did you know that there are changes to sleep as we get older?

- **Sleep becomes less deep, and there are more awakenings.**
- **Sleep becomes more vulnerable to disturbances (environmental factors, medications, poor lifestyle factors, etc.)**
- **The good news is that people, at any age, can change their behavior to improve their sleep.**

Source: The Brain–Sleep Connection: GCBH Recommendations on Sleep and Brain Health, 2016



Tips for a good night's sleep

Do:

- Follow a regular sleep schedule
- Develop a bedtime routine
- Control temperature in room
- Use low lighting
- Exercise during the day

Don't:

- Nap in the late afternoon or evening
- Use electronic devices right before bed
- Eat large meals late
- Consume caffeine late in the day
- Drink to help sleep - alcohol won't help you!

Older adults need about the same amount of sleep as all adults: 7 to 9 hours each night.



Source: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/good-nights-sleep>



Social Engagement

- **Social engagement is an important predictor of well-being throughout life.**
- **People who have meaningful activities, like volunteering, say they feel happier and healthier**
- **Social activities are linked to reduced risk for some health problems, including dementia**





Ideas for social engagement

- **Join a club**
- **Volunteer or find a part-time job**
- **Deliver meals to isolated adults**
- **Get involved through a religious group**
- **Make lunch plans**
- **Meet up with friends**
- **Join your local Senior Center or Laguna Woods club**





Managing Medical Conditions

- **Weight management**
- **Hypertension**
- **Diabetes**
- **High Cholesterol**
- **Depression**





Managing Medical Conditions

Depression

- There is substantial body of evidence linking depression to cognitive decline and dementia.
- Older adults with depression experience “pseudodementia”
- Treatments are available.



Managing Other Threats to Brain Health

Alcohol use disorders

- There is extensive evidence on excessive alcohol as a risk factor for dementia and cognitive decline.
- If you are engaging in hazardous and harmful drinking it is important to talk about it.
- Behavior and psychological interventions are available as treatments.





Managing Other Threats to Brain Health

Chronic Stress

- We all experience stress. In fact, acute stress is good for us because it allows our mind and body to respond to certain situations.
- Chronic stress affects memory, mood, anxiety, and promotes inflammation, which adversely affects brain and heart health.
- If you believe you are experiencing stress, talk to your doctor.
- Stress management treatments and techniques are available.



Managing Other Threats to Brain Health

Healthy ways to relax and recharge:

- Go for a walk.
- Spend time in nature.
- Call a good friend.
- Release tension with a good workout.
- Write in your journal.
- Take a long bath.
- Light scented candles
- Savor a warm cup of coffee or tea.
- Play with a pet.
- Work in your garden.
- Get a massage.
- Curl up with a good book.
- Listen to music.
- Watch a comedy.





Small Changes Big Impacts

Small Changes, Big Impacts

Engaging in a healthy lifestyle requires preparation and goal setting.

- **Pick one thing you can do in each area that may help improve your brain health**
- **Think of small, first steps you can take**



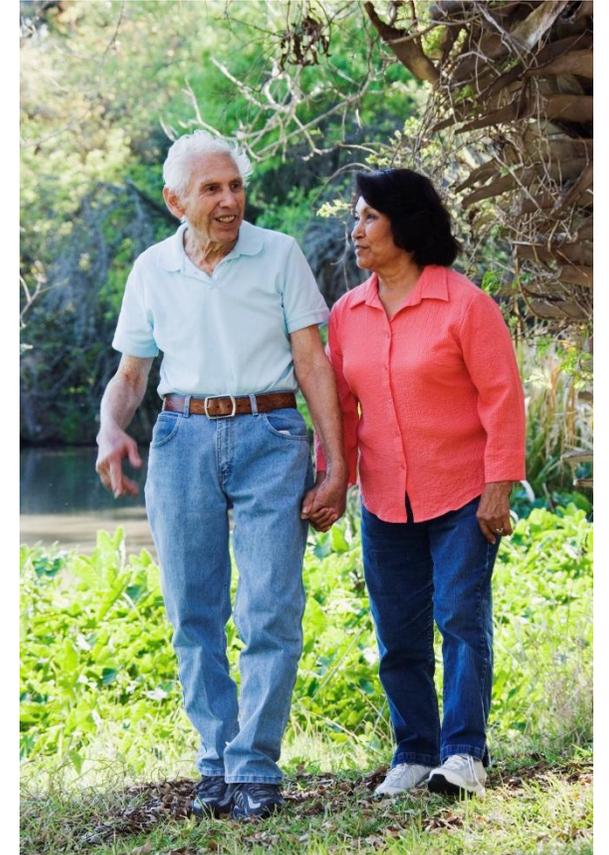
Small Changes, Big Impacts

Goals should be:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Realistic
- Time-bound

Examples:

- *“I will walk for 15 minutes, 3 times per week for the next 2 weeks”*
- *“I will eat one serving of vegetables 4 days out of the week for the next 4 weeks”*
- *“I will attend at least 2 college classes within the next month.”*
- *“I will volunteer 2 hours at the community center every Saturday for the summer.”*



Small Changes, Big Impacts

Write down what you will do and when you will do it

- Keep track of your progress
- If you miss one day, don't quit, keep going
- Celebrate progress



Connect With Us: Call our Helpline

Our telephone helpline provides information, emotional support, education and resource referrals.



HELPLINE:

844-373-4400

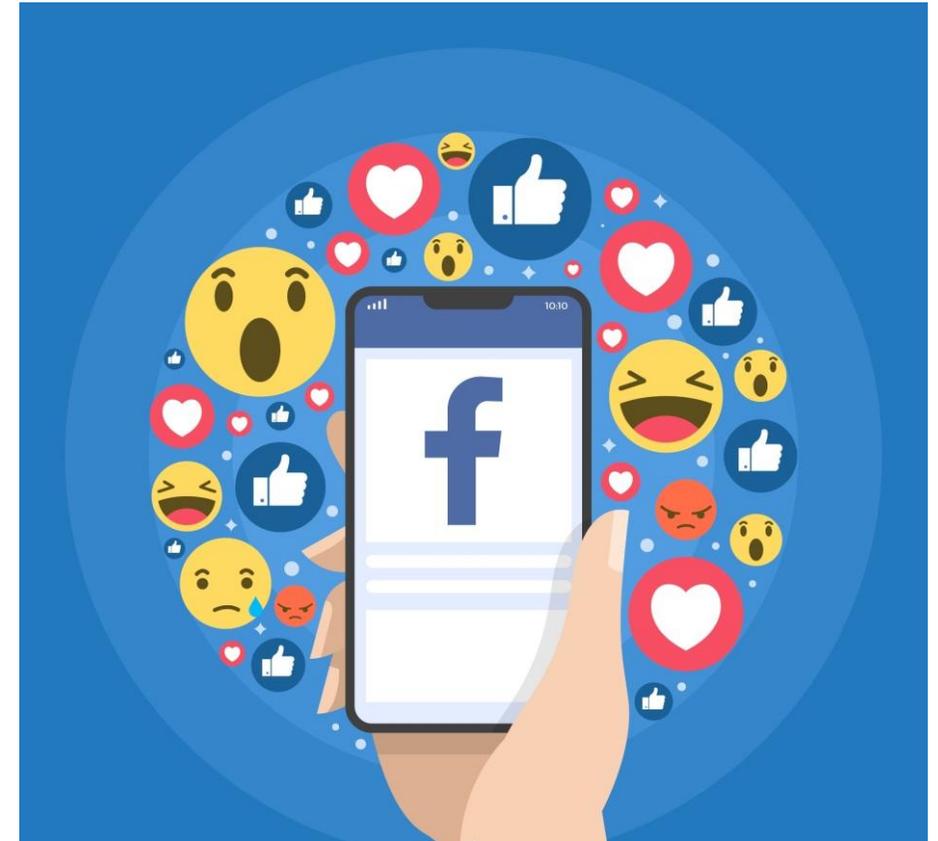
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