

MIND YOUR BRAIN: EAT RIGHT



DIET AND NUTRITION

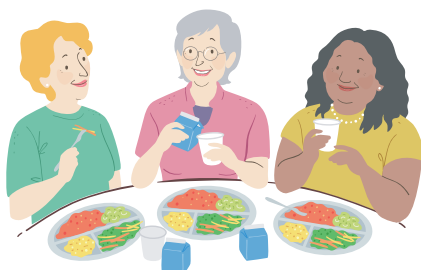
What is good for the *heart* is good for the *brain*. Studies show adopting a heart-healthy diet, even later in life, may have benefits for your brain and overall health.

DID YOU KNOW?

Research shows that individuals who use the Mediterranean style of eating display better memory and thinking skills compared to those who maintained a low-fat diet.

The Mediterranean diet includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, beans, extra virgin olive oil and fish. This diet also recommends avoiding products like fast food, processed food, red meat and whole fat dairy foods to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Consider incorporating the following components into your diet.



- **Vegetables:** Incorporating cruciferous vegetables, like broccoli, cabbage and kale, into your diet may help improve your cognitive function and memory.
- **Berries and cherries:** Try berries as a snack. The darker berries, like blackberries and blueberries, have anthocyanins and other flavonoids that may promote memory function.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids:** Eating foods that include omega-3 fatty acids, docosahexaenoic acid, or DHA may help improve your memory. Seafood is one of the best sources of omega-3 acids.
- **Walnuts:** Try walnuts as a quick snack. These are great for your heart health and may also help improve cognitive function.

MIND YOUR BRAIN: GET MOVING



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Aerobic exercise, like walking, dancing or biking, can protect existing brain cells and promote the growth of new brain cells.

Improving endurance, flexibility, balance and strength can positively impact your cognitive function and overall health.

Engaging in physical activity is different for every person. For some people this means taking a walk everyday, others may enroll in a dance class or biking club. Be sure to check with your health care provider if you haven't been active for a while and want to start something new!

Ask yourself the following questions: What kinds of things are you already doing to exercise and move your body? Is there room for you to step it up and move more?

Aerobics

- Get at least 150 minutes of exercise each week.
- Move about 30 minutes most days.
- Walking is a good start.

Flexibility

- Try to complete 3-5 stretching activities per week (10 minutes for each session).
- Hold each stretch for 30 to 90 seconds.

Balance

- Try to engage in balancing activities 2-3 days each week.
- Walking heel to toe is good balance practice.



MIND YOUR BRAIN: STAY MENTALLY ACTIVE



MENTAL FITNESS

Mental stimulation can give your brain a workout and create new connections between nerve cells. It may even help your brain create new cells.

Ways to exercise your brain include: reading, building puzzles, trying math problems, playing Sudoku, learning a new language, playing an instrument and so much more!

Try some of these brain exercises to keep yourself sharp!

Build your vocabulary: Look up an unfamiliar word in the dictionary then try to use that word in your daily conversations. Follow Merriam Webster for a new word everyday.

www.merriam-webster.com/word-of-the-day

Read a new book: Use your imagination to picture new places, people or time periods.

Try memorizing something: Exercising your brain to remember something stimulates neural plasticity in the brain, which may create new pathways for cells. Try this by learning a new song and singing it from memory.

Channel your creativity: Whether you like to paint freely on a blank slate, or use a coloring book, creating art can relax your brain. Art is a good way to stimulate the creative parts of our brain, while focusing attention away from ourselves.

Stay social with us at Alzheimer's Orange County. Check out all of Alzheimer's Orange County events at: alzoc.org/events/



MIND YOUR BRAIN: GET YOUR NUMBERS CHECKED



OVERALL HEALTH

It is important to know your numbers! Your blood sugar levels, cholesterol, and blood pressure are indicators of your overall health.

Talk to your doctor if you have any concerns about your health. Openly communicating with your health care provider is a very important part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Review how you can take steps to get to know your numbers by talking to your health provider about the following topics:

Monitoring your cholesterol: Too much low-density lipoprotein (LDL), sometimes called “bad” cholesterol, is associated with an increased risk of developing dementia. Controlling your weight, eating right and exercising can help improve your cholesterol levels.

Maintain healthy blood sugar levels: Diabetes is a risk factor associated with dementia. By eating right, exercising and maintaining a healthy body mass index (BMI), you can lower your blood sugar levels and reduce your risk of developing diabetes.

Understand your blood pressure: Your blood pressure is an indicator of your overall health. High blood pressure can have a negative impact on your brain health. Try relaxing activities such as meditation or yoga to reduce high blood pressure. Talk to your health care provider about additional ways to improve your blood pressure.



MIND YOUR BRAIN: REMEMBER TO REST



SLEEP AND RELAXATION

Sleep is an important part of the restorative process for your brain and body. Poor sleep can affect your physical abilities, as well as your memory and thinking.

It is important to try to get 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night.

Sometimes we can't get 7 to 9 hours of rest per night. If this is the case, consider taking a quick nap. Studies have shown that a ten-minute nap can improve cognitive function and reduce sleepiness.

It is important to remember that napping for too long or too often can negatively impact your sleep patterns causing more harm than good.



Guide to a good night's sleep:

- Adhere to a regular sleep schedule.
- Develop a bedtime routine.
- Try not to nap in the evening.
- Avoid large meals before bed. They can make it hard to fall asleep.
- Try making your bedroom a screen free zone - no TV, cell phone, computer or tablet. The light from these devices can make it hard to fall asleep.
- Don't consume caffeine late in the day. It can cause you to stay awake.
- Avoid alcohol. It does not help you fall asleep or stay asleep.

MIND YOUR BRAIN: CONNECT



SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Research shows that regularly engaging in social activities can reduce the risk associated with cognitive decline.

Brain health scientists report that individuals with the most social interaction experience memory loss at a slower rate compared to those with less social interaction.

Plan a recurring group exercise event, or regularly volunteer in your community to build social networks and stay connected.

To find a volunteer opportunity, try reaching out to a local non-profit organization to see if they have any available positions. You can also search for volunteer positions that interest you.

Try www.volunteermatch.org

or www.unitedway.org

Stay social with us at Alzheimer's Orange County. Join one of our MindFit OC activities to meet like-minded individuals.

We have a variety of activities to keep you engaged with your community, including these:

- Mind Your Brain: Strategies for Cognitive Strength at any Age
- 4 Weeks to a Better Memory
- Brain Boot Camp
- Memory Club

Check out all of Alzheimer's Orange County events at: alzoc.org/events/

