

KEEP YOUR BRAIN HEALTHY: LOWER YOUR RISK FOR COGNITIVE DECLINE

You Can Make a Difference!

We can't control some risk factors for Alzheimer's such as age and genetic profile, but scientists are studying a number of other factors that can make a difference. Research suggests that certain life style factors such as a nutritious diet, exercise, social engagement, healthy sleep, managing medical conditions and pursuing mentally stimulating activities, might help to reduce the risk of cognitive decline and Alzheimer's disease.



Diet and Nutrition

A diet that includes lots of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and is low in fat and added sugar can reduce the risk of many chronic diseases. Studies suggest that a diet rich in vegetables, especially leafy greens and cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, is associated with a reduced rate of cognitive decline. Research points to the benefits of two diets in particular: the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet and the Mediterranean diet.



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



EAT: Vegetables, fruits, nuts, beans, whole grains, lean meats, fish, poultry, and vegetable oils



AVOID: Saturated/trans-fats, processed foods, solid fat, sugar, salt, deep fried food, and unhealthy fast food



Always consult with your doctor about dietary supplements and vitamins



Physical Activity

Research has shown that exercise can stimulate the brain's ability to maintain and create old and new connections, which are vital to healthy cognition. Evidence also suggests that exercise benefits brain cells by increasing blood and oxygen flow to the brain.



Check with your doctor before beginning any new exercise program



The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity exercise per week



Gradually increase your level of activity and incorporate activities you enjoy



Manage Medical Conditions

Conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, obesity, depression, head trauma, high cholesterol, and smoking may all increase the risk of dementia.



Monitor blood pressure, blood sugar, weight, and cholesterol



Avoid smoking and excess alcohol consumption, and get regular check-ups



Cognitive Activity

Staying mentally active encourages blood flow to the brain and promotes new pathways and brain connections. Mentally stimulating activities may maintain or even improve cognition.



Read books, play strategic games, learn new skills or hobbies and **keep learning**



Examples include: learning a new skill or language, or taking classes at adult education centers



Social Engagement

Staying cognitively active throughout life, via social engagement or intellectual stimulation, is associated with a decreased risk of Alzheimer's disease. Research indicates that connecting with others socially benefits overall health and may delay the onset of dementia.



Visit with friends or family and engage with new friends



Ask friends to join you for a physically or mentally stimulating activity



Stay involved in the community. Join a group or club, or volunteer outside the home



Sleep and Relaxation

Sleep promotes the creation of new brain cell connections and is essential to overall mental and physical well-being. Several chronic diseases of the brain and heart are related to excess sleep. Sleep deprivation can also impair brain functions such as memory and decision-making.



Regardless of age, it is recommended that adults get 7-9 hours of sleep . Don't shortchange yourself!



Find ways to de-stress during the day such as deep breathing or meditation, checking in with yourself about what's bothering you, and doing things you enjoy

We offer classes & programs aimed at **improving brain health** and **reducing the risk of cognitive decline**.

- 4 Weeks to a Better Memory*

- Brain Boot Camp*

*Programs developed by:

UCLA

Longevity Center

- Mind your Brain: Strategies for Cognitive Strength at any Age - Mind Check

Alzheimer's
ORANGE COUNTY

MEMORY SUPPORT SERVICES

844-373-4400 | www.alzoc.org

Sources: www.nia.nih.gov/health, www.healthyliving.org, www.health.harvard.edu/