

The Best Ways to Love Your Brain

1. **Get enough sleep**
2. **Be smoke-free**
3. **Take care of your mental health**
4. **Eat healthy**
5. **Keep moving**
6. **Challenge your brain**
7. **Stay social**



Understanding Prevention Research

- **Clinical trial versus study**
- **Modifiable risk factors are meant for large groups**
- **Current evidence based on studies**
- **The Gold Standard**
- **Not every prevention strategy is made for a trial**



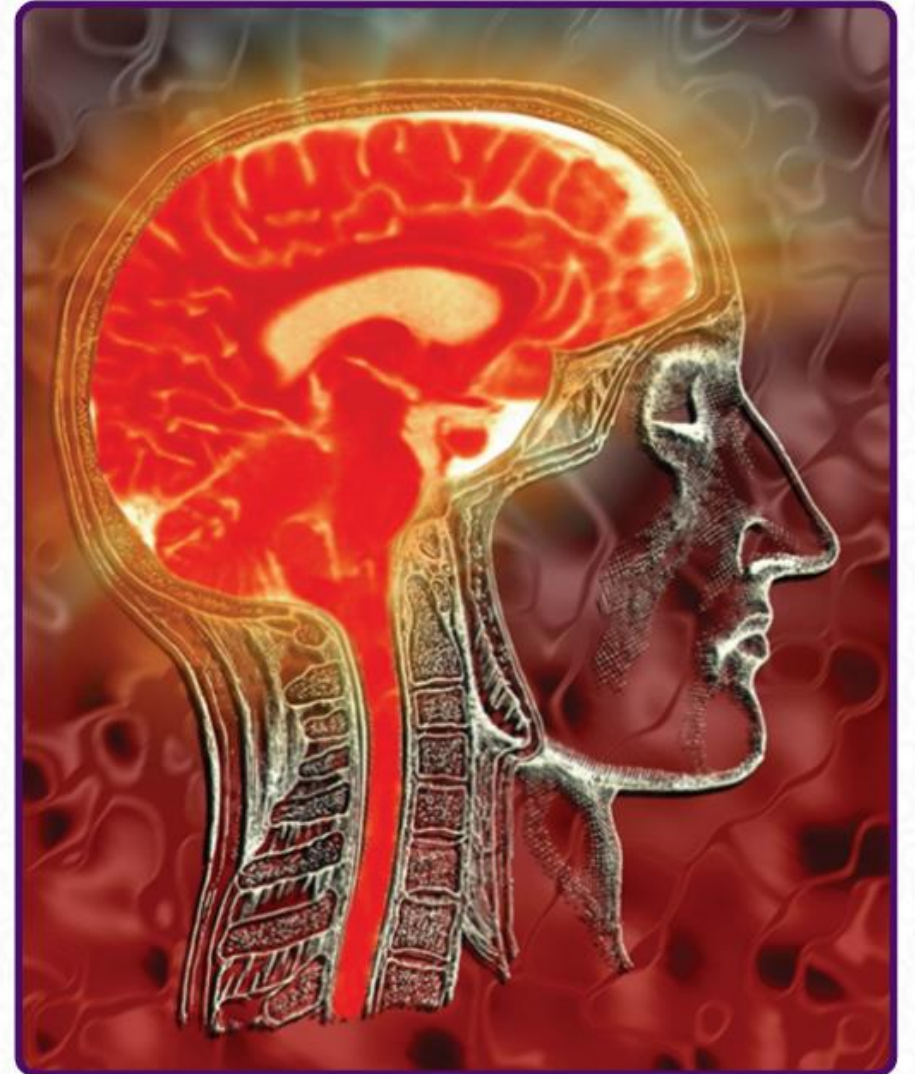
Remember These!





The Brain

- The brain is the control center of the body.
- Over 100 billion nerve cells, or neurons, create a branching network.
- Signals traveling through the brain form memories, thoughts and feelings.
- Alzheimer's disease destroys brain cells.





The Heart-Brain Connection

The heart and brain are interrelated

What you do to protect your heart can also help your brain continue to operate at its best.

The brain needs blood flow

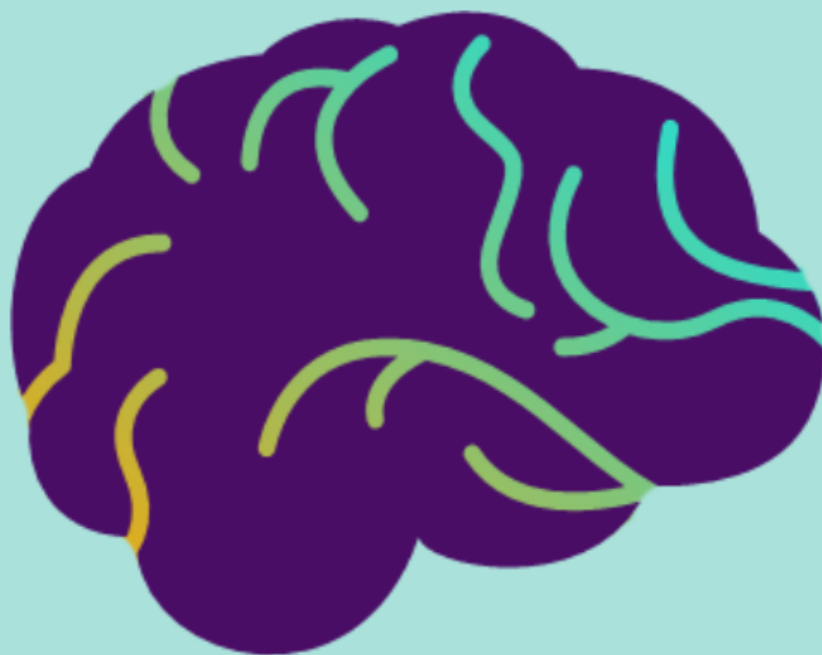
The brain depends on oxygen and adequate blood flow to work well. It receives 20-25% of the blood from every heartbeat.





Alzheimer's and other dementia are NOT a normal part of aging

Dementia is a general term that describes problems with thinking and memory that are severe enough to interfere with a person's daily life.



Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia. There is currently no cure for Alzheimer's. However, there are drug and non-drug options that can help with symptoms and may have the ability to slow disease progression.

Some healthy behaviors may lower the risk of dementia.



Story of Your Health

Your overall health is affected by your:



Genes and family
history



Environment



Lifestyle

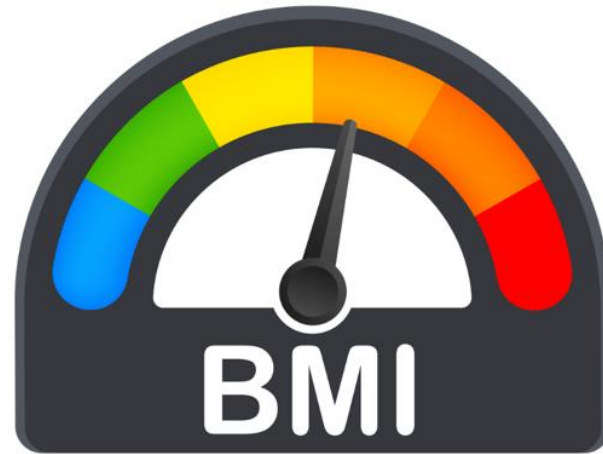
Healthy habits may be beneficial for your body and brain.

Story of Your Health

Ask your health care provider what your numbers are and what they should be.



Blood Pressure



BMI/Weight



Blood Sugar



Cholesterol

Audience Participation

How many hours of sleep do you get each night?

Less than 5

5-6

6-7

7-8

More than 8?

Do you go to bed and wake up at the same time each day?

Get Enough Sleep



Practice good sleep techniques

- Maintain a regular sleep-wake schedule
- 7-8 hours in a 24-hour period
- Expose yourself to outdoor light during the day

Accept changes

- Sleep is more easily interrupted
- The body's internal clock shifts

Reminders

- Adjust caffeine intake
- Keep pets that disturb sleep out of the bedroom
- Restrict fluids and food three hours before going to bed
- Keep smartphones, TVs, electronics, out of the bedroom



More Tips

- Choose an appropriate pillow
- Take a warm bath before bed
- Try some scented oil on your pillow, like lavender
- Try a weighted blanket
- Listen to soothing music





Be Smoke-Free

Smoking has a direct impact on the health of your brain.



What the Science Tells Us

- Studies have found that smoking increases the risk of cognitive decline and may increase the risk of dementia.
- Quitting smoking may reduce a person's chance of developing cognitive decline back down to the level of nonsmokers.





Tips to Be Smoke-Free

*Find support
through quitlines.*

*Talk with your
doctor or another
health care
professional.*

*Look for a smoking
cessation program
or strategy that
works for you.*



Take Care of Your Mental Health

It's important to prioritize yourself. Make time for self-care.



Take Care of Your Mental Health

- Pay attention to your stress level and any symptoms of anxiety, depression or other concerns. These affect the health of your brain.
- Many healthy habits contribute to good mental health.



Take care of your mental health

- - ✓ What are some things I enjoy doing?
 - ✓ How can I build breaks into my day?
- - ✓ How can I focus on self-care?
-





Tips for Self-Care

- Take a nap.
- Go for a walk.
- Dance.

- Sing a song.
- Bake a treat.

- Read a book.
- Watch a funny video.



[Eating Healthy Is Good for Your Brain \(brightcove.net\)](http://brightcove.net)

Eat Right

Eat a Brain-Healthy Diet

- Eat less meat and sweets
- Consume more:
 - Fish and seafood
 - Nuts
 - Grains
 - Beans
 - Leafy green vegetables
 - Olive oil



Healthy Eating Plans for Brain Health



- Mediterranean diet
- DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet
- MIND Diet (Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay)

What about Sugar?

- ❑ Sugar comes with many names: sucrose, glucose, fructose, corn fructose, sweet syrups
- ❑ Glucose is the fuel source of brain
- ❑ High blood-sugar levels increase risk of cognitive decline & dementia
- ❑ Limit intake of added sugars and sweeteners (one can of soda =9 tsp of sugar/150 calories)
- ❑ Avoid low blood sugar in brain (dizzy, irritable, lethargic)

AARP®



Dietary Fiber in Healthy Eating



Two Types

- Soluble—dissolves in water: example oatmeal, nuts, beans, lentils, apples and blueberries
- Insoluble--helps food move through your digestive system: wheat, whole wheat bread, whole grain couscous, brown rice, legumes, carrots, cucumbers and tomatoes

How Much Daily?

25 g (women)

35 g (men)



SAVE YOUR MONEY, HONEY!

The GCBH does not recommend any dietary supplement for brain health.*

6 Things to Consider Before You Buy a Supplement

Beware of supplement claims that sound too good to be true.

Check for warnings related to your specific health conditions and for third-party quality assurance.

Show your health care provider what drugs & supplements you're already taking. They may interact with each other.

Think about whether you're already getting enough of a nutrient through your diet before you buy.

Food is better than pills to get the nutrition you need to help your brain.

Make sure you **don't take more of a supplement than is recommended**; more is not always better.



*Unless you are one of the relatively few people in the U.S. with a vitamin B12/folate deficiency. It is estimated that 4.4% of U.S. adults 50+ are low on vitamin B12, but even fewer are low on folate. See Evatt, M.L. et al. (2010) "Association between vitamin B12- containing supplement consumption and prevalence of biochemically defined B12 deficiency in NHANES III (Third National Health and Nutrition Survey)." Public Health Nutr.: 13(1), 25-31. See also <https://www.cdc.gov/nutritionreport/pdf/Second-Nutrition-Report-Overview-Factsheet.pdf>



Get Moving

Physical activity can improve brain health.



What the Science Tells Us

- Consistent cardiovascular activity will reduce risk of cognitive decline.
- Physical activity may directly benefit brain cells and reduce other risk factors.
- For most people, any increase in movement can have an impact on overall health.



Audience Participation



I get consistent, vigorous exercise:

- A. Never**
- B. 1-3 times a week**
- C. Never**

I feel I get mild movement everyday:

True or False

Get moving

- ✓ What activities do I want to try?
- ✓ How can I build more physical activity into my day?
- ✓ Who can I ask to join me?





Tips for Getting Physically Active

Find things that might already be a part of your day — walk around your neighborhood, take the stairs more often or get off the bus a stop earlier.

Start small: Short amounts of physical activity add up.

Try something fun for you. Ask friends, family members or neighbors to join you.

Staying Sharp®



Empowering you to take control of your Brain Health.

Did you know research shows lifestyle behaviors may have the biggest impact on brain health? Add Staying Sharp to your AARP membership and learn about healthy habits to support brain health.

[GET STARTED](#)

Take care of your mental health



- Pay attention to your stress levels and anxiety.
- Pay attention to other symptoms such as depression as it affects the health of your brain.
- Many healthy habits contributed to good mental health.
- Self Care



Debunking Myths About the Aging Brain

7 FACTS ABOUT YOUR BRAIN



MYTH

FACT

1

You are born with all the neurons that your brain will ever have.

Neurons are continually created throughout your life in areas of the brain through a process called neurogenesis.

2

You can't learn new things when you are old.

Learning can happen at any age when you get involved with cognitively stimulating activities like meeting new people or trying new hobbies.

3

We don't really know how the brain works.

Researchers have made great strides in understanding the brain in recent years. The field of neuroscience is at the cusp of new and exciting breakthroughs.

4

Dementia is an inevitable consequence of old age.

Dementia is not a normal part of aging. There is a big difference between typical age-related changes in the brain and those that are caused by disease.

5

Only young people can learn a new language.

While it may seem simpler for kids—with simpler sentence structures and a lack of self-consciousness—your age isn't a limitation in learning a new language.

6

Older people are doomed to forget things.

Remembering details is easier for some people than others, but this is true of all ages. There are strategies to help remember names, facts, etc. and paying closer attention can often help you remember better.

7

A person who has memory training never forgets.

Keep practicing your memory skills. "Use it or lose it" applies to memory training in the same way it applies to maintaining your physical health.

How Many Words Can You Make?

RAINBOW



Stay Connected

Connecting with others socially can have many health benefits.



What the Science Tells Us

- Staying socially active may support brain health.
- Social engagement is associated with living longer with fewer disabilities.
- Those who feel well-connected tend to make healthier choices in other areas.



- *Stay connected*
 - ✓ How do I like to stay connected to others?
 - ✓ How can I get involved in my community?
- ✓ Are there any clubs or groups I would like to join?
-





Tips for Staying Connected

- Volunteer for a cause that's important to you.

- Schedule regular phone calls or video chats to keep in touch.

- Visit friends and family.
- Participate in events in your community.

**Do you remember
the three photos
from the beginning?**



How the Alzheimer's Association® Can Help

24/7 Helpline



800.272.3900

Online Resources



alz.org®

**Alzheimer's Association & AARP
Community Resource Finder**



communityresourcefinder.org



What area will you focus on?


What area do you feel is most important to brain health?

Resources



HEALTH
Brain Health & Wellness

Conditions · Brain Games · Global Council on Brain Health · Staying Sharp



Read the Global Council on Brain Health Report
The rich potential of music to promote brain health

Music, the Brain, and Staying Sharp
Learn about the powerful connection between music and the brain and its impact on memory and focus.

The Power of Music on the Brain
An important new report from AARP's brain health experts


Discover How to Disrupt Dementia
Funding research for the cure

aarp.org/brainhealth

Global Council on Brain Health™

A COLLABORATIVE FROM AARP

globalcouncilonbrainhealth.org



Empowering you to take control of your Brain Health.

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GET STARTED

stayingsharp.aarp.org