

5 Ways to Keep Your Brain Healthy



Alzheimer's is a devastating brain disease for which we still don't know the exact cause. Age and heredity are two risk factors for the disease that you can't control. But lifestyle factors – something you can control – may play an important role in who gets Alzheimer's and who doesn't.

Five lifestyle changes for brain health

A word of caution: You can adopt all the right habits and still get Alzheimer's; scientists don't know if lifestyle changes can directly prevent or delay the disease. Still, current thinking holds that the following habits are good for brain and body:

1. **Be social.** Interacting with other people stimulates the brain. Spend time with family and friends. It's also good to reach out to new people. Join a community group or volunteer locally. And combining physical activity with socializing may have even more benefits. Join a walking group, for example.
2. **Challenge yourself.** When it comes to brain power it's "use it or lose it." Challenge yourself by doing puzzles, learning new card games or taking up a new sport. Do the same things in different ways. Seek out new experiences. Take a class in something you've always been curious about. When you walk or drive, take different routes.
3. **Nosh on heart-healthy foods.** A heart-healthy Mediterranean diet is also a brain-healthy diet. The Mediterranean diet includes plenty of whole grains, fruits and vegetables, plus fish, nuts and olive oil. Limit foods high in cholesterol and avoid unhealthy fats (saturated and trans fats), but get your omega-3s found in foods like salmon. And talk to your doctor about brain healthy vitamins B12, E, C and folate.
4. **Exercise regularly.** Physical activity helps raise blood flow to the brain and stimulates new brain cells. It also lowers the risk of developing some diseases that can lead to dementia, such as heart attack, stroke and diabetes. Pick activities you enjoy and can stick with over time. Even better, find a partner to do it with you. Check with your doctor before you increase your physical activity.
5. **Be safe.** Take measures to prevent head injuries, which can jar and damage the brain. This means wearing helmets for bike riding, skiing and motorcycle riding. Don't forget to buckle your seatbelt when you drive. Smoking and drinking are also risk factors for Alzheimer's. If you smoke, quit. If you choose to drink, do so in moderation.

For more information on PrimeCare, call our toll-free number or visit our website.

1-888-313-7929 | primecare.com

SOURCES:

National Institute on Aging. Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral Center. Preventing Alzheimer's disease: What do we know? Accessed: 03/17/2014
Helpguide.org. Alzheimer's & Dementia Prevention. How to reduce your risk and protect your brain. Accessed: 03/17/2014
Alzheimer's Association. Brain health. Accessed: 03/17/2014

PrimeCare
Part of OptumCare®

The company does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in health programs and activities.

We provide free services to help you communicate with us. Such as, letters in other languages or large print. Or, you can ask for an interpreter. To ask for help, please call 1-800-956-8000.

ATENCIÓN: Si habla español (Spanish), hay servicios de asistencia de idiomas, sin cargo, a su disposición. Llame al 1-800-956-8000.

請注意：如果您說中文 (Chinese)，我們免費為您提供語言協助服務。請致電：1-800-956-8000。

PrimeCare is part of OptumCare®, a leading health care delivery organization that is reinventing health care to help keep people healthier and feeling their best. Learn more at optumcare.com. Optum® and OptumCare® are trademarks of Optum, Inc.

© 2017 PrimeCare Medical Network, Inc. All rights reserved.