



Share the Wellness Tip

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Train Your Brain

Feeling forgetful? Have a brain drain? Here are a few tips that may keep your brain healthier and lower your risks for illnesses that harm memory and thinking.

- **Adopt a Brain-Healthy Diet** A diet that supports brain health is rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fish and legumes, with only moderate alcohol intake. Dark-skinned fruits and vegetables offer high levels of brain-healthy antioxidants. Cold-water fish such as salmon and trout offer beneficial omega-3 fatty acids.

- **Be Physically Active** Regular exercise and physical activity help maintain the brain's blood supply and promote growth of new brain cells. Staying fit also reduces the risk for heart attack, stroke, and diabetes— independent risk factors for dementia.

- **Be Social** Staying social appears to protect people from dementia. Socially active people take part in sports, cultural pursuits, volunteer and similar activities with others while maintaining close personal relationships that include emotional support.

- **Be Mentally Active** Keeping your brain active every day may help you build a reserve of brain cells and connections among them. Stay curious. Read and write. Attend lectures and plays. Try your hand at crossword puzzles and other brain-stretching games.

- **Be Heart Smart** Maintaining a healthy heart seems to keep the brain healthy, too. Add these behaviors to the list of brain-boosters above:

- Don't smoke.
- Maintain healthy blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels.
- Maintain a healthy weight.

The key difference between simple memory lapses and memory problems such as dementia is how much the problem disrupts your work, social life and ability to function independently. Talk to your health care provider if you have additional concerns about your memory.

Sources: American Psychological Association; Helpguide.org

