



Share the Wellness Tip

November 27, 2013

BRAIN BOOSTERS

You can't cure Alzheimer's disease—but you can take steps that may keep your brain healthier and lower your risks for illnesses that harm memory and thinking. While there are no guarantees, the Alzheimer's Association offers these suggestions:

1. 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. Look for foods that are low in fat and cholesterol, which can clog arteries.

2. 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. Aerobic exercise such as walking, bicycling, gardening, yoga, and tai chi, done for 30 minutes a day, seems to help protect the brain.

3. Be Socially Active

Staying social appears to protect people from dementia. Socially active people take part in sports, cultural pursuits, and similar activities with others while maintaining close personal relationships that include emotional support. What kind of social activities can engage you mentally and physically? Examples include volunteering, playing cards, traveling, and working on behalf of a cause.

4. Be Mentally Active

Keeping your brain active every day may help you build a reserve of brain cells and connections among them. To do so, be a lifelong learner. Stay curious. Read and write. Take adult education courses. Attend lectures and plays. Try your hand at crossword puzzles and other brain-stretching games.

5. 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. Being obese in middle age can double your risk for Alzheimer's later in life.

Sources: Alzheimer's Association; National Institute on Aging



- D
on't
smo
ke.

- M
aint
ain
heal
thy
bloo
d
pre
ssur
e,
chol
este
rol,
and
bloo
d
sug
ar
lev-
els.

- M
aint
ain
a
heal
thy
wei
ght.
Be-
ing
obe
se
in
mid
dle
age
can
dou
ble
you
r
risk
for
Alz-
hei
mer
's
lat-
er
in
life.

Source:
[Alz-
hei
mer](#)