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## 10 Ways to Love Your Brain

Positive, everyday actions can make a difference in brain health, even lowering the risk of cognitive decline and possibly Alzheimer's and dementia. Incorporate some or all of these habits into your life to help maintain a healthy brain.

Start your brain health today — it's never too early or too late to start.



### **Challenge your mind**

Be curious! Put your brain to work and do something that is new for you. Learn a new skill. Try something artistic. Challenging your mind may have short- and long-term benefits for your brain.



### **Stay in school**

Education reduces the risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Encourage youth to stay in school and pursue the highest level of training possible. Continue your own education by taking a class at a local library or college, or online.



## **Get moving**

Engage in regular exercise. This includes activities that raise your heart rate and increase blood flow to the brain and body. Find ways to build more movement into your day, such as walking, gardening — whatever works for you!



## **Protect your head**

Help prevent an injury to your head. Wear a helmet for activities like biking, and wear a seatbelt. Protect yourself while playing sports. Do what you can to prevent injuries.



## **Be smoke-free**

Quitting smoking can lower the risk of cognitive decline back to levels similar to those who have not smoked. It's never too late to stop.



## **Control your blood pressure**

Medications can help lower high blood pressure. And healthy habits like eating right and physical activity can help, too. Work with a health care provider to control your



## **Manage diabetes**

Type 2 diabetes can be prevented or controlled by eating healthier, increasing physical activity and taking medication, if necessary.



## **Eat right**

Eating healthier foods can help reduce your risk of cognitive decline. This includes more vegetables and leaner meats/proteins, along with foods that are less processed and lower in fat. Choose healthier meals and snacks that you enjoy and are available to you.



## **Maintain a healthy weight**

Talk to your health care provider about the weight that is healthy for you. Other healthy habits on this list — eating right, exercising and sleeping well — can help maintain a healthy weight.



## **Sleep well**

Good quality sleep is important for brain health. Stay off screens before bed and make your sleep space as comfortable as possible. Do all you can to minimize disruptions. If you have any sleep-related problems, such as sleep apnea, talk to a health care provider.

## **Terms for understanding brain health**

"Cognitive decline" refers to changes in the ability to think that happen as people age. Some changes are a normal part of getting older, but you can take steps to slow that decline. More significant decline or severe changes are not normal and may be a sign of Alzheimer's disease or other dementia.

"Dementia" is a general term used to describe problems with thinking and memory that are severe enough to interfere with a person's daily life. Alzheimer's is the most common cause of dementia but there are several kinds of dementia. Dementia is not a normal part of aging.

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The Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health.

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