

## Healthy Living for your Brain and Body

### Tips from the Latest Research



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## Learning Objectives:

- Identify the reasons for taking care of yourself as you age
- List strategies to age well in the following areas:
  - Physical health and exercise
  - Diet and nutrition
  - Cognitive activity
  - Social engagement
- Make your own plan for healthy aging using the *Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body: Tips from the Latest Research* workbook

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## Aging and Health

Aging well depends on your:

- Genes
- Environment
- Lifestyle

Lifestyle choices may help keep your body and brain healthy.



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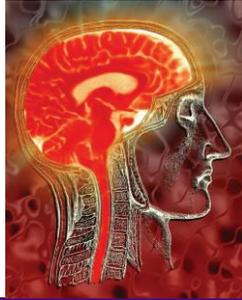
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## The Brain

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



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## 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. 25% of blood from every heartbeat goes to the brain.



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## Alzheimer's and Dementia

**Dementia** is caused by many different diseases and conditions. It is not part of normal aging.

**Alzheimer's disease** is most common cause of dementia.

**Risks** for Alzheimer's and dementia include:

- Age
- Genetics
- Head injury
- Cardiovascular factors
- Fewer years of formal education

Therapies for Alzheimer's can treat symptoms for a time, but **they cannot cure, prevent or even slow disease progression.**

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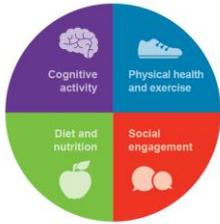
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## Taking Care of Yourself as you Age



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## Physical Health & Exercise



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### What we know:

- Cardiovascular activity may reduce your risk of cognitive decline.
- Regular and vigorous exercise leads to increased blood flow – other physical activities may also yield benefits.
- There is no single "recipe" for brain health.

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## Physical Health & Exercise

### What we can do:

- Do something you like
- Start out small
- Move safely
- Get your heart rate up
- Ask friends to join you
- Check with your doctor before you start

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### Physical Health & Exercise

#### What we can do

- Stop smoking
- Avoid excess alcohol
- Get adequate sleep
- Avoid head injury
- Manage stress
- Treat depression
- Visit your doctor regularly

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### Physical Health & Exercise

#### What we can do:

- Monitor numbers and take action
  - Blood pressure
  - Blood sugar
  - Weight
  - Cholesterol

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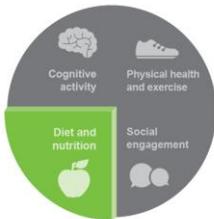
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### Diet & Nutrition



#### What we know:

- What's good for the heart may also be good for the brain.
- Nutritious food is fuel for the brain.
- Following some dietary guidelines can reduce your risk of heart disease, cancer, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, stroke and diabetes.

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### Diet & Nutrition

What we can do:

**EAT:**

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Nuts, beans and whole grains
- Lean meats, fish and poultry
- Vegetable oils

**AVOID:**

- Saturated/ trans fats
- Processed foods
- Solid fat, sugar and salt
- Deep-fried food
- Unhealthy fast foods

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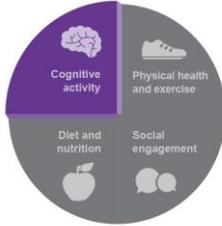
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### Cognitive Activity



#### What we know:

- Keeping your mind active forms new connections among brain cells.
- Cognitive activity encourages blood flow to the brain.
- Mentally stimulating activities may possibly maintain or even improve cognition.
- Engaging in formal education will keep your brain healthy and can provide protection against developing dementia.

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### Cognitive Activity

What we can do:

- Read books and articles that challenge and inspire you
- Complete puzzles and play games that are challenging for you
- Learn new skills or hobbies
- Engage in ongoing learning

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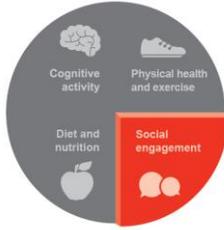
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### Social Engagement



#### What we know:

- Social engagement is associated with living longer with fewer disabilities.
- Staying engaged in the community offers you an opportunity to maintain your skills.
- Remaining both socially and mentally active may support brain health and possibly delay the onset of dementia.

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### Social Engagement

#### What we can do:

- Visit with friends and family
- Engage with others
- Stay involved in the community
- Volunteer outside the home
- Join a group or club

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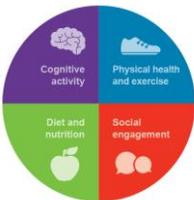
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### Putting all four pieces together



- Take care of your **HEALTH**
- Get **MOVING**
- **EAT** right
- Keep your **MIND** active
- Stay **CONNECTED** with others

Combine all four to achieve maximum benefits!

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### What you can do NOW:

- Begin today
- Start small and build
- Do what you enjoy and stick with it
- Make healthy choices
- Make a plan
- Get support from others
- Have fun



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### Be a savvy consumer:

- If it's too good to be true – it's probably *not* true!
- Be cautious when you hear huge promises or reports of miracle cures.
- Do thorough research.
- Consult trusted, reputable professionals:
  - Your doctor
  - Your local pharmacist
  - The Alzheimer's Association



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- 24/7 Helpline
- Alz.org
- Community Resource Finder
- Alzconnected
- Alzheimer's Navigator



24/7 Helpline  
**800.272.3900**  
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ALZHEIMER'S navigator  
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