



Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body

ALZHEIMER'S  ASSOCIATION®



Learning Objectives

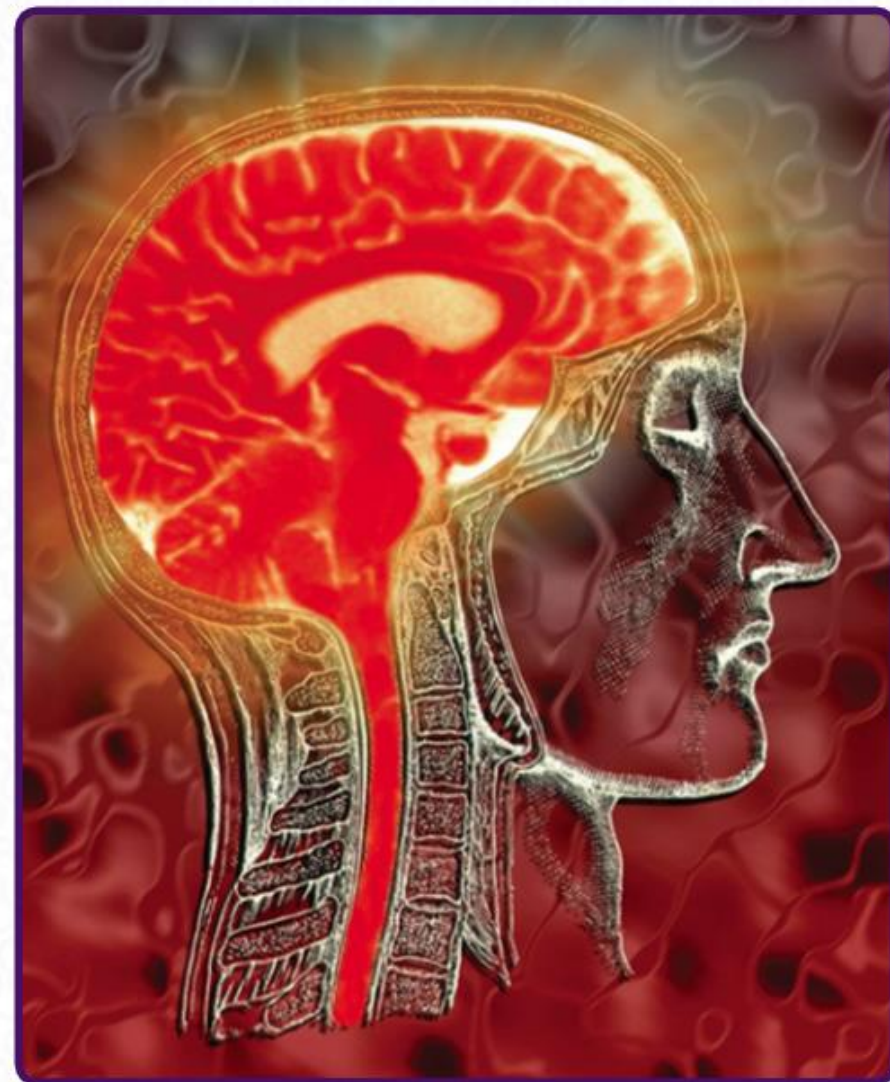
- Identify how certain behaviors affect our brains and bodies
- List strategies for healthy decision-making in the following areas:
 - Sleep
 - Smoking
 - Mental health
 - Physical activity
 - Balanced nutrition
 - Cognitive engagement
 - Social engagement





The Brain

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





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. It receives 20-25% of the blood from every heartbeat.





Alzheimer's is a normal part of aging.

- ☐ True
- ☐ False



Alzheimer's and other dementia are NOT a normal part of aging

Dementia is a general term that describes problems with thinking and memory that are severe enough to interfere with a person's daily life.



Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia. There is currently no cure for Alzheimer's. However, there are drug and non-drug options that can help with symptoms and may have the ability to slow disease progression.

Some healthy behaviors may lower the risk of dementia.



Story of Your Health

Your overall health is affected by your:



Genes and family
history



Environment



Lifestyle

Healthy habits may be beneficial for your body and brain.



Story of Your Health

Ask your health care provider what your numbers are
and what they should be.



Blood pressure



Blood sugar



Weight/BMI



Cholesterol



What the Science Tells Us

- Many factors that increase the risk of heart disease and stroke may also increase the risk of cognitive decline and dementia.
 - Hypertension
 - Diabetes
 - Midlife obesity
- Good cholesterol is good for the heart, and what's good for the heart is good for the brain.



It's never too early or too late to incorporate healthy habits.

- ☐ True
- ☐ False



• Tips for Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body



Get quality sleep



Be smoke-free



Take care of your mental health



Get moving



Eat healthy



Challenge yourself



Stay connected



Get Quality Sleep

Sleep is essential for overall health and well-being.



What the Science Tells Us

- Sleep impacts overall health.
- It affects our ability to maintain healthy blood pressure and blood sugar.
- Inadequate sleep can cause problems with memory and thinking.



Get quality sleep

- ✓ What kind of environment helps me sleep?
- ✓ What changes might help me create a more peaceful sleep setting?
- ✓ How can I minimize disruptions?





Tips for Quality Sleep

Control the room temperature or amount of light for what you prefer.

Turn off screens before bedtime to help wind down before sleep.

Talk to your doctor if you experience frequent sleep problems.



Be Smoke-Free

Smoking has a direct impact
on the health of your brain.



What the Science Tells Us

- Studies have found that smoking increases the risk of cognitive decline and may increase the risk of dementia.
- Quitting smoking may reduce a person's chance of developing cognitive decline back down to the level of nonsmokers.



Be smoke-free

- ✓ What could help me stop smoking or stay smoke-free?
- ✓ What resources are available online or in my community?





Tips to Be Smoke-Free

*Find support
through quitlines.*

*Talk with your
doctor or another
health care
professional.*

*Look for a smoking
cessation program
or strategy that
works for you.*



Take Care of Your Mental Health

It's important to prioritize yourself. Make time for self-care.



Take Care of Your Mental Health

- Pay attention to your stress level and any symptoms of anxiety, depression or other concerns. These affect the health of your brain.
- Many healthy habits contribute to good mental health.

Take care of your mental health

- ✓ What are some things I enjoy doing?
- ✓ How can I build breaks into my day?
- ✓ How can I focus on self-care?





Tips for Self-Care

- Take a nap.
- Go for a walk.
- Dance.

- Sing a song.
- Bake a treat.

- Read a book.
- Watch a funny video.



Get Moving

Physical activity can improve brain health.



What the Science Tells Us

- Consistent cardiovascular activity will reduce risk of cognitive decline.
- Physical activity may directly benefit brain cells and reduce other risk factors.
- For most people, any increase in movement can have an impact on overall health.



Get moving

- ✓ What activities do I want to try?
- ✓ How can I build more physical activity into my day?
- ✓ Who can I ask to join me?





Tips for Getting Physically Active

Find things that might already be a part of your day — walk around your neighborhood, take the stairs more often or get off the bus a stop earlier.

Start small: Short amounts of physical activity add up.

Try something fun for you. Ask friends, family members or neighbors to join you.



Eat Healthy

Eating an overall healthy diet may reduce your risk of many diseases.



What the Science Tells Us

- What's good for the heart is also good for the brain.
- Nutritious food is fuel for the brain.
- Eating a balanced diet may reduce your risk of heart disease, cancer, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, stroke and diabetes.



Examples of Balanced Nutrition



DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension)



Mediterranean diet

Key elements of these include:

- Fruits and vegetables
- Nuts, beans and whole grains
- Lean meats, fish and poultry
- Healthier fats
- Limited sugar and salt



Eat healthy

- ✓ How can I cook differently to make my meals healthier?
- ✓ What healthy foods can I swap in?
- ✓ What new foods am I willing to try?





Tips for Healthy Eating

- Use olive oil (or another healthy oil) instead of butter.
- Use sodium-free spices or flavorings instead of salt.

Focus on what you can add in, such as more fruits and veggies, instead of what to take away.

- Build meals around vegetables, beans and whole grains.
- Choose leaner cuts of meat.

A Note About Vitamins and Supplements

The World Health Organization (WHO) concluded in 2019 that vitamins and supplements should not be recommended to reduce the risk of cognitive decline and dementia.

*Beware of potential
false claims.*

*Focus on balanced
nutrition to promote
a healthy brain and
body.*

*Talk with a health
care professional
about any concerns
of nutritional
deficiencies.*



Challenging your brain may help lower your risk of cognitive decline.

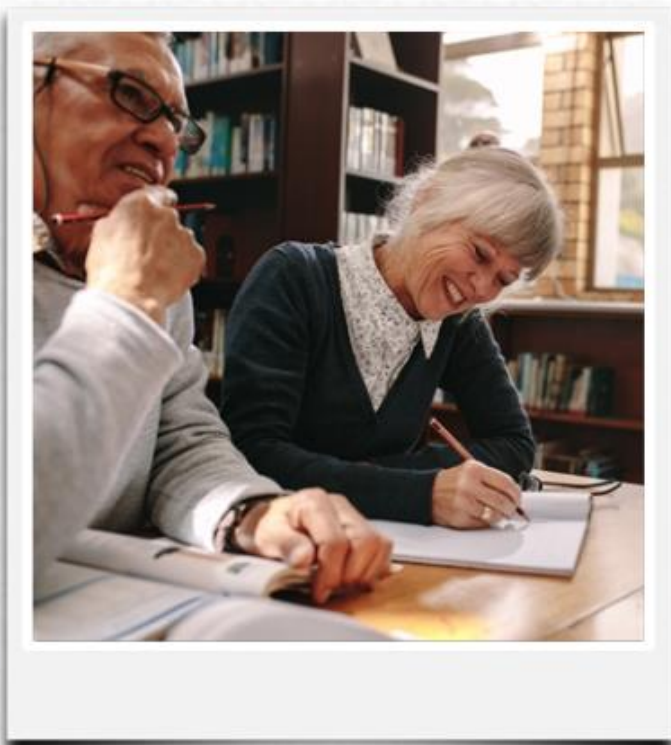
- ☐ True
- ☐ False



Challenge Yourself

Challenging your mind might have short- and long-term benefits for your brain.

What is Cognitive Engagement?



Cognitive engagement is a term that means keeping our minds active and challenged.



This can be learning new skills, working on a challenging task or engaging in ongoing learning.



What the Science Tells Us

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



Challenge yourself

- ✓ What new hobbies or skills do I want to learn?
- ✓ What activities sound like a fun challenge?
- ✓ What topics would I like to learn more about?





Tips to Challenge Yourself

- Take a class at a local college or community center on a new topic or skill.

- Try a new cooking technique.
- Learn a new language.

- Build a piece of furniture.
- Learn how to play a new strategy game, like chess.



Stay Connected

Connecting with others socially can have many health benefits.



What the Science Tells Us

- Staying socially active may support brain health.
- Social engagement is associated with living longer with fewer disabilities.
- Those who feel well-connected tend to make healthier choices in other areas.



- *Stay connected*

- ✓ How do I like to stay connected to others?
- ✓ How can I get involved in my community?
- ✓ Are there any clubs or groups I would like to join?



Tips for Staying Connected

- Volunteer for a cause that's important to you.

- Schedule regular phone calls or video chats to keep in touch.

- Visit friends and family.
- Participate in events in your community.



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How the Alzheimer's Association® Can Help

24/7 Helpline



800.272.3900

Online Resources



alz.org®

**Alzheimer's Association & AARP
Community Resource Finder**



communityresourcefinder.org



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