



Six Pillars of Brain Health

Did you know that your lifestyle choices have a profound impact on your brain health? What you eat and drink, how much you exercise, how well you sleep, the way you socialize, and how you manage stress are all critically important.

So what can you do today to protect your brain down the road? Start by learning about the 6 pillars of brain health:

1. Physical Exercise

Get your body moving! People who exercise regularly have a lower risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. Exercise improves blood flow and memory; it also stimulates chemical changes in the brain that enhance learning, mood, and thinking. Be fit. Be smart.

2. Food & Nutrition

Eat smart to think better. Making smart food decisions every day is important to brain health. As you grow older, your brain is exposed to harmful stress that results in a process called oxidation, which can damage your brain cells. Food rich in antioxidants can help fend off the harmful effects of oxidation.

3. Medical Health

Control your medical risks. Hypertension, diabetes, obesity, depression, head trauma, higher cholesterol, and smoking all increase the risk of dementia. You can control and reduce these risks. Get your annual check-up, follow your doctor's recommendations, and take medications as prescribed. A brain-healthy lifestyle benefits your body and your mind.

4. Sleep & Relaxation

Rest well. Sleep energizes you, improves your mood and your immune system, and may reduce buildup in the brain of an abnormal protein called beta-amyloid plaque, which is associated with Alzheimer's disease. Practicing meditation and managing stress may help fend off age-related decline in brain health. Stay positive. Be Happy.

5. Mental Fitness

It's your mind: Use it or lose it! Mental exercise is just as critical as physical exercise in keeping your brain fit and healthy. Exercises for your mind improve your brain's functioning and promote new brain cell growth, decreasing your likelihood of developing dementia. Just like your muscles, you have to use your brain or you'll lose it.

6. Social Interaction

Stay connected. Engaging in an active social life can protect against memory loss. Spending time with others, participating in stimulating conversation, and staying in touch and connected with family and friends are all good for your brain health. Studies have shown that those with the most social interaction in their community experience the slowest rate of memory decline.

Source: Cleveland Clinic

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