

alzheimer's  association®

WHAT DO WE
KNOW ABOUT
PREVENTING
ALZHEIMER'S
DISEASE?



YOU CAN REDUCE YOUR RISK OF COGNITIVE DECLINE.

Cognitive decline is a deterioration in memory or cognition that is, to some extent, expected with age. Normal cognitive decline is different from dementia in that it is not severe enough to interfere with daily life.

Research is still evolving, but evidence is strong that people can reduce their risk by making key lifestyle changes, including participating in regular physical activity and maintaining good heart health. Based on this research, the Alzheimer's Association offers 10 Ways to Love Your Brain, a collection of tips that can reduce the risk of cognitive decline.



WE DON'T KNOW HOW TO PREVENT ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE — YET.

Alzheimer's is a fatal disease of the brain that causes problems with memory, thinking and behavior. It is the most common cause of dementia, a general term for the loss of memory and other abilities serious enough to interfere with daily life.

While Alzheimer's is not normal aging, age is the greatest known risk factor for developing the disease. However, many experts believe the majority of cases occur as a result of complex interactions among genes and other factors.

Medications are available to temporarily improve cognitive function and quality of life, but there is no known way to prevent, cure or even slow the disease — yet. The Alzheimer's Association® is leading the worldwide effort to find a treatment for Alzheimer's, delay its onset and prevent it from developing.





10 WAYS TO LOVE YOUR BRAIN

It's never too late or too early to start thinking about your brain's health — making healthy choices at any age is beneficial. The Alzheimer's Association has identified the following lifestyle habits as ways to reduce your risk of cognitive decline and maintain or potentially improve your overall health.



BREAK A SWEAT

Engage in regular cardiovascular exercise that elevates your heart rate and increases blood flow to the brain and body. Several studies have found an association between physical activity and reduced risk of cognitive decline.



HIT THE BOOKS

Formal education in any stage of life will help reduce your risk of cognitive decline and dementia. For example, take a class at a local college, community center or online.



BUTT OUT

Evidence shows that smoking increases risk of cognitive decline. Quitting smoking can reduce that risk to levels comparable to those who have not smoked.



FOLLOW YOUR HEART

Evidence shows that risk factors for cardiovascular disease and stroke — obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes — negatively impact your cognitive health. Take care of your heart, and your brain just might follow.



HEADS UP

Brain injury can raise your risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Wear a seat belt, use a helmet when playing contact sports or riding a bike, and take steps to prevent falls.



FUEL UP RIGHT

Eat a healthy and balanced diet that is lower in fat and higher in vegetables and fruit to help reduce the risk of cognitive decline. Although research on diet and cognitive function is limited, certain diets, including Mediterranean and Mediterranean-DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension), may contribute to risk reduction.



CATCH SOME ZZZ'S

Not getting enough sleep due to conditions like insomnia or sleep apnea may result in problems with memory and thinking.



TAKE CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Some studies link a history of depression with increased risk of cognitive decline, so seek medical treatment if you have symptoms of depression, anxiety or other mental health concerns. Also, try to manage stress.



STUMP YOURSELF

Challenge and activate your mind. Build a piece of furniture. Complete a jigsaw puzzle. Do something artistic. Play games, such as bridge, that make you think strategically. Challenging your mind may have short- and long-term benefits for your brain.



BUDDY UP

Staying socially engaged may support brain health. Pursue social activities that are meaningful to you. Find ways to be part of your local community — if you love animals, consider volunteering at a local shelter. If you enjoy singing, join a local choir or help at an afterschool program. Or, just share activities with friends and family.

LEARN MORE

» *Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body: Tips from the Latest Research*

This program, based on the most current research in healthy aging, is available online at alz.org/education and through chapter offices across the country.

» alz.org/research

Find information on risk factors and current research into prevention.



alz.org/10ways

Learn more about 10 Ways to Love Your Brain.



alz.org/education

Free online workshops, including:
» *Understanding Alzheimer's and Dementia.*



alz.org/CRF

We're in communities nationwide.



800.272.3900

24/7 Helpline – Available all day, every day.

alzheimer's association®

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.

Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's disease®.

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