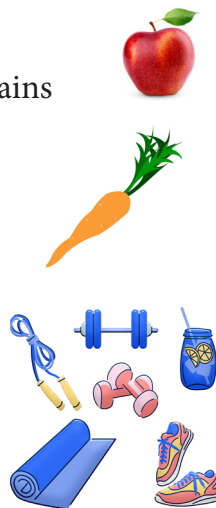


Talking About Brain Health and Aging

Aging well depends on your genes, lifestyle choices, and environment. Even if you're healthy, brain changes as you age may lead to increased challenges with multitasking, paying attention, and recalling words. However, most of us—at any age—can learn new things and improve skills that can be important for maintaining our independence.

PROTECTING YOUR BRAIN HEALTH

- ✓ Eat or drink less sugar, salt, and solid fat
- ✓ Eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
- ✓ Choose lean meats, fish, or poultry
- ✓ Control portion sizes
- ✓ Choose low- or non-fat dairy
- ✓ Drink adequate fluids
- ✓ Make physical activity a part of your routine



- ✓ Seek exercise tips from a health care provider
- ✓ Join programs that teach exercise safety
- ✓ Volunteer or work
- ✓ Join a social club
- ✓ Try programs at local community center
- ✓ Get 7-8 hours of sleep every night

REGULAR HEALTH SCREENINGS MAY IDENTIFY WAYS TO IMPROVE BRAIN HEALTH AND REDUCE RISK

RISKS TO BRAIN HEALTH

ACCIDENTS

As we get older, the risk of falls and other accidents that can cause brain injury increases.

REDUCE RISK

Exercise to improve balance, wear safety belts and helmets, get an eye exam, make sure your home is safe, and get enough sleep. □

ALCOHOL

Consuming alcohol can impair communication among brain cells and affect your balance, coordination, memory, and emotions.

REDUCE RISK

Older adults should be especially careful, as medicines can interact with alcohol. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020 defines “moderation” as up to 1 drink a day for women and 2 drinks a day for men. □

SMOKING AND POLLUTION

Smoking and other pollutants can affect your health, including your heart and lungs.

REDUCE RISK

If you smoke, consider quitting. Try to limit your exposure to air pollution from fires (including fireplaces and candles), vehicles, and industrial areas. □

HEALTH CONDITIONS

Heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, and sleep problems can affect brain health.

REDUCE RISK

Manage your cholesterol and blood pressure, exercise, and eat healthily. Get recommended health screenings and talk to your doctor about what else may help. □

HEARING IMPAIRMENT

Research suggests that hearing loss can result in cognitive decline through reduced social and cognitive stimulation.

REDUCE RISK

Protect your ears from excessive noise exposure. Ask your doctor about using hearing aids, which appears to reduce risk from hearing loss. □