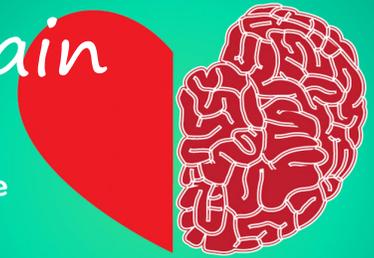


10 Ways to Love Your Brain

Brought to you by Pike County Health Department, Home Health and Hospice. Growing evidence indicates that people can reduce their risk of cognitive decline by adopting key lifestyle habits. When possible, combine these habits to achieve maximum benefit for the brain and body. Start now. It's never too late or too early to incorporate healthy habits.



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.



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BUT OUT

Butt out – evidence shows that smoking increases risk of cognitive decline. Quitting smoking can reduce that risk to levels of those who have not smoked.



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.



FUEL UP RIGHT

Eat a healthy and balanced diet that is lower in fat and higher in fruits and vegetables 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.



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.



FOLLOW YOUR HEART

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



BUDDY UP

Staying socially engaged may support brain health. Pursue social activities that are meaningful to you. Find ways to be part of your 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



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.

For more information on brain health visit the Alzheimer Association's website at www.alz.org/brain-health or call their helpline at 1-800-272-3900.