

alzheimer's association® Brain Health

When people think about staying fit, they generally think from the neck down. But the health of your brain plays a critical role in almost everything you do: thinking, feeling, remembering, working, playing — and even sleeping.

The good news is that emerging evidence suggests there are steps you can take to help keep your brain healthier as you age. These steps might also reduce your risk of [Alzheimer's disease](#) or other [dementias](#).



[Inside the Brain: An Interactive Tour](#)
Learn how the brain works and how Alzheimer's affects it.

Make brain-healthy life choices

Like other parts of your body, your brain may lose some agility as you get older. It can deteriorate even more if you don't take care of it. Science is unlocking many of the mysteries of the brain, but we don't have all the answers yet. You can do everything "right" and still not prevent Alzheimer's disease. What's offered here is the best and most up-to-date information available about brain health so you can make your own decisions about your overall health.

[Stay physically active](#)

Physical exercise is essential for maintaining good blood flow to the brain as well as to encourage new brain cells. It also can significantly reduce the risk of heart attack, stroke and diabetes, and thereby protect against those risk factors for Alzheimer's and other dementias.



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[Adopt a brain-healthy diet](#)

Research suggests that high cholesterol may contribute to stroke and brain cell damage. A low fat, low cholesterol diet is advisable. And there is growing evidence that a diet rich in dark vegetables and fruits, which contain antioxidants, may help protect brain cells.



[Learn more >>](#)

Remain socially active

Social activity not only makes physical and mental activity more enjoyable, it can reduce stress levels, which helps maintain healthy connections among brain cells

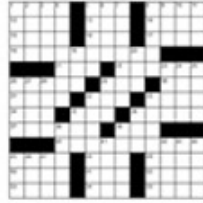
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Stay mentally active

Mentally stimulating activities strengthen brain cells and the connections between them, and may even create new nerve cells.

[Learn more >>](#)



Crossword puzzles are a fun way to stimulate your brain.

[Click here for an e-puzzle.](#)



Disease and risk factors you can't control

Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of [dementia](#) – brain disorders that affect your ability to function effectively in daily living. Well-established risk factors for Alzheimer's disease are genetics and aging. Unfortunately, aging and genetics are two risk factors you can't control.

It's not known what causes Alzheimer's disease or what role genetics plays in most cases of Alzheimer's, though having parents or siblings with the disease increases your risk. A small percentage of cases is known to be caused by inherited mutated genes. In other cases, variants of specific genes increase risk, but even people who inherit such variants from both parents still may not get the disease. These risk factors that you cannot change will set a starting point for you, but there is hope that adopting healthy brain life habits might delay or prevent the appearance of Alzheimer's disease.

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Stay up-to-date on the latest advances in Alzheimer's treatments, care and research. [Subscribe now](#)

Research on protecting brain health and preventing cognitive decline

Protecting brain health and preventing cognitive decline are an important focus of the worldwide Alzheimer's disease research effort.

- Learn more about the latest discoveries in the [Prevention section of our Research Center](#).
- Read pivotal studies and scientific consensus statements in our [Selected Reports and Resources section](#).

Of interest ...



[The Healthy Brain Initiative: A National Public Health Road Map to Maintaining Cognitive Health](#) (70 pages)

The Alzheimer's Association and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention proposed this plan to make brain health part of our national wellness agenda.

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