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Objectives

By the end of this program, you will be able to:

- Explain how brain health is important now and across your lifetime
- Recognize actions that can help protect brain health
- Make a plan to build brain-healthy habits by applying what you have learned

Please note: This program is intended to provide education on how to protect brain health through healthy living. If you have concerns about or are living with dementia, there are several Association programs available to support you. Resources will be provided at the end of this program.

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Think about actions to take

To help build and maintain brain-healthy habits, we will walk through creating an action plan.

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Healthy habits for your brain 

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HEALTHY
HABITS
FOR YOUR
BRAIN


Control
Your Blood
Pressure


Manage
Diabetes


Maintain a
Healthy
Weight


Be Smoke-
Free


Get
Moving


Eat Right


Sleep Well



Challenge
Your Mind



Stay in
School


Protect
Your Head

We will focus on these brain-healthy habits.

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Healthy living benefits the brain 




Learn more at alz.org/USPOINTER

USPOINTER

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

- The first large-scale, randomized controlled trial of its kind in the U.S.
- Showed that a structured healthy lifestyle program combining exercise, healthy diet, cognitive engagement, and health monitoring can protect cognitive function.


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Importance of Brain Health

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What is brain health?




Memory and thinking

Social-emotional, behavioral and mental health

Sensory and movement

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How does the brain work?



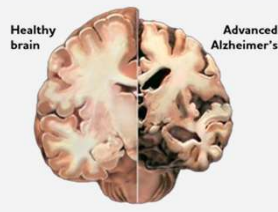
Neurons (nerve cells) are essential to all human activity.

100 billion neurons connect at more than 100 trillion points to create a "neuron forest."

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Alzheimer's Disease and the brain




Healthy brain

Advanced Alzheimer's

Brain changes can start 20 years or more before symptoms of dementia are experienced

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Understanding dementia 

Cognitive decline

Cognitive decline refers to changes in memory and thinking that are worsening over time. Just as with our physical abilities, some cognitive decline is expected as we age.

Mild cognitive impairment (MCI)


MCI is an early stage of memory loss or other cognitive ability loss (such as language or visual/ spatial perception) in individuals who maintain the ability to independently perform most activities of daily living.

Dementia

Dementia is a loss of memory and other thinking abilities that are severe enough to interfere with daily life.

Dementia is not a normal part of aging.


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Understanding dementia 

Alzheimer's is the most common cause of dementia but there are several other diseases that can cause dementia, including:

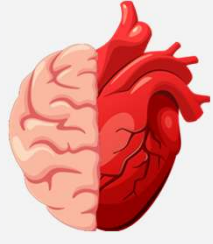
- Vascular
- Lewy Body
- Frontotemporal degeneration (FTD)
- Mixed Pathology (dementia from more than one cause)

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The brain-heart connection 

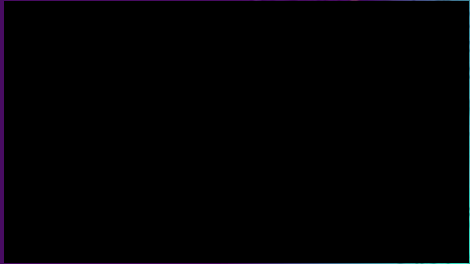
Our hearts and brains are closely connected.

- The heart pumps blood to the brain.
- The blood provides oxygen and other nutrients to nourish the brain.
- What's good for our hearts is good for our brains.




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Video – Why brain health matters to me



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When is the best time to start thinking about brain health?



It's never too early or too late to take action for brain health.

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Health Conditions and the Brain



- Maintain a Healthy Weight
- Control Your Blood Pressure
- Manage Diabetes
- Be Smoke-Free

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What's good for the heart is good for the brain

<p>Control Your Blood Pressure</p>  <p>Blood pressure should be less than 130/80 mmHG.</p>	<p>Manage Diabetes</p>  <p>Healthy eating, exercise and medications can be effective in managing diabetes.</p>	<p>Maintain a Healthy Weight</p>  <p>Talk with a health care provider about what is right for you.</p>	<p>Be Smoke-Free</p>  <p>Quitting can be hard! 1-800-QUIT-NOW or local resources can help.</p>
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Brain-Healthy Habits



 <p>Get Moving</p>	 <p>Eat Right</p>	 <p>Sleep Well</p>
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Benefits of brain-healthy habits



<p>Get Moving</p> <p>Exercise improves brain function by increasing blood and oxygen flow. It also helps improve connections among brain cells.</p>	<p>Eat Right</p> <p>Improved nutrition is connected to better brain health. The MIND diet provides optimal nutrition for the brain.</p>	<p>Sleep Well</p> <p>Deep sleep may help "wash away" a build up of proteins in the brain that are a risk to brain health.</p>
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Discussion: Change is hard! 

Challenges From your experience, what are some challenges to building these healthy habits?

Strategies What are some strategies that have worked to overcome these obstacles?

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Get moving 

Aerobics, strength training and stretching are all part of a balanced exercise routine.

Aim for:

- Aerobic exercise:** 30-35 minutes of moderate-to-intense aerobic activity four times a week
- Strength training:** 15-20 minutes, two times a week
- Stretching and balance exercises:** 10-15 minutes, two times a week

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Tips to get moving 

- Think about something fun and new you want to try.
- Ask friends to join you.
- Link it to something fun.
- Track your progress.

alz.org/exercisetracker

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Eat right



The MIND diet provides optimal nutrition for brain health.

Aim to regularly eat:

- Leafy Green Vegetables, 1 serving/day
- Other Vegetables, 1 serving/day
- Berries, 5 servings/week
- Whole Grains, 3 servings/day
- Poultry (white meat, skinless), 2 servings/week
- Fish (not fried), 1 serving/week
- Beans/Legumes, 3 servings/week
- Nuts, 5 servings/week
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil, 2 servings/day

Limit:

- Red & Processed Meats
- Butter/Margarine
- Cheese
- Fried Foods
- Sweets

alz.org/foodtracker

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Tips to eat right



Focus on adding more healthy foods. What can you add?

- Healthy afternoon snacks
- Vegetables on pasta or rice
- Fruit along with dessert

Find healthier foods you can swap in. What new foods are you willing to try?

- Olive oil
- Herbs
- Leaner meats
- Whole grains

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A note about vitamins and supplements

Many vitamins and supplements claim to improve thinking and memory.


- Many are developed with limited or no regulation.
- They may interact with other medications.
- Overall evidence doesn't show that vitamins and supplements reduce dementia risk.




A healthy diet remains the best way to promote brain health.

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Sleep well




Quality sleep allows you to go through the sleep cycle, including deep sleep, and this is valuable for brain health.











Adults should aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep.

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Tips to sleep well



 Avoid caffeine later in the day.	 Be physically active during the day.	 Cooler temperatures promote sleep.	 Minimize noise.
 Minimize naps.	 Keep a regular sleep schedule.	 Block light with black out curtains or masks.	 Protect your sleep from disruptions.

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Brain-Healthy Habits



 Challenge Your Mind	 Stay in School	 Protect Your Head
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Keep your brain working hard

Stay in School Challenge Your Mind

Cognitive engagement builds new connections in our brains.

- Learning builds up a "cognitive reserve".
- The more years of formal education, the better.
- Cognitive engagement encourages bloodflow to the brain and more connections between brain cells.

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Video - What is cognitive engagement?

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Tips to challenge your mind


Challenge Your Mind

- Try strategy games
- Do puzzles
- Learn a language
- Explore a new hobby


Get out of your comfort zone and make your brain work hard.

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Prevent head injuries




Head injuries, including concussions, can cause short- and long-term problems.



Make sure everyone in your vehicle is wearing a seatbelt.




Wear a helmet to minimize injuries while bike riding, skating, skiing, or similar activities.




Organize your space to minimize the risk of falling. Keep safety in mind for home projects.


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Other factors being studied







Hearing and vision loss:
To date, some studies suggest that hearing and/or vision loss may be associated with higher risk of dementia.



Air pollution:
Some studies show a link between particulate matter in the air and possible increased risk of cognitive decline.



Alcohol abuse:
Excessive use of alcohol over time can lead to memory issues and possibly even to Korsakoff syndrome – a chronic memory disorder.



Stress:
Short-term stress may affect our daily routines and brain-healthy habits. So, managing stress could be important for brain health.

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Key points



All Ages Welcome!



Nurture the healthy habits you adopted in childhood, or start new ones at any stage of life.

More Habits = More Benefits



Include a variety of healthy habits.

Consistency is Key!



For these habits to make a difference, they need to be done on a regular basis!

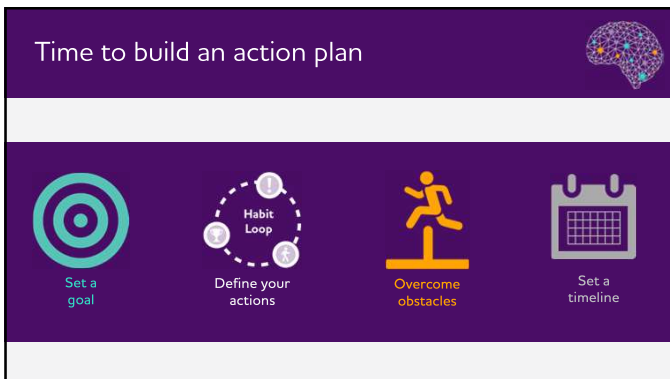
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What is your goal?

- Pick one of the areas you wanted to focus on.
- What change do you want to make? Write it down.

Consider a flexible goal to encourage success!

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What action will you take?

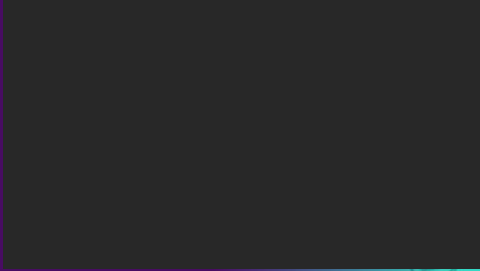

A habit loop is a three-step process that can help build new routines. When habits are built into routines, they stick!

- What is your cue?
- What is your action?
- How will you reward yourself?




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Video - Habit loop





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What obstacles might you need to overcome?

- Consider the speedbumps you might encounter.
- How could you avoid or overcome this obstacle?

Obstacles are expected. Remember to keep going!




Overcome obstacles

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Set a timeline

- When will you start?
- How often will you do the new action?
- When will you check in on your progress?
- How will you track your progress?




Set a timeline


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You can do this!


Review and revise your action plan.




Set a goal



Define your actions



Overcome obstacles



Set a timeline

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Video – Moving forward

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Healthy habits for your brain

10 HEALTHY HABITS FOR YOUR BRAIN

What can I do for my brain health **now?**

- Control Your Blood Pressure
- Manage Diabetes
- Maintain a Healthy Weight
- Be Smoke-Free
- Get Moving
- Eat Right
- Sleep Well
- Challenge Your Mind
- Stay in School
- Protect Your Head

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Additional resources and support

24/7 Helpline
800.272.3900

Local Resources

- Find your chapter (alz.org/findus)
- Support groups
- Alzheimer's Association Community Resource Finder (alz.org/crf)

Online (alz.org)

- alz.org/care
- alz.org/safety
- alz.org/driving

ALZConnected*
(alz.org/alzconnected)

ALZNavigator™
(alz.org/alznavigator)

My ALZ Journey™
(alz.org/myalzjourney)

Education Programs
(alz.org/education)
In-person, online and virtual

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