

The image features a central, glowing blue brain with a complex network of light blue lines radiating outwards, resembling a neural network or a digital connection. The brain is superimposed on a faint, light-colored silhouette of a human head. The background is a soft, light gray with a subtle grid pattern.

Living a Brain Healthy Lifestyle

By Cordula Dick-Muehlke, Ph.D.

Are there really ways to keep your brain healthy?



In the past decade, researchers have identified steps all of us can take to reduce our risk for Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

What's Good for Your Heart is Good for Your Brain!

It's a well-known fact that high blood pressure and high cholesterol increase your risk for heart disease and stroke. Researchers have now found that high blood pressure and high cholesterol are equally bad for your brain.

Are You at Risk?



RESEARCH SHOWS...

- ▶ Borderline hypertension, with a systolic (upper) blood pressure reading of 140–159, doubles your risk for Alzheimer's. Combined with high cholesterol of greater than 250 mg/dl, your risk is nearly tripled.
- ▶ Marked hypertension, with a systolic blood pressure reading of over 160, plus high cholesterol, increases the chance you'll develop Alzheimer's disease 3.5 times.

The Solution

Research has shown that a healthy diet, regular exercise and/or medications can reduce your chances of developing dementia by 50–70%.



Healthy Weight and Diet Are Critical to Brain Health!

Certain dietary practices seem to have a particularly beneficial effect on the brain.

Managing weight through diet and exercise can offset the risk for dementia.

Are You at Risk?



RESEARCH SHOWS...

- ▶ Being overweight, with a body mass index (BMI) of 25–29.9, has been shown to increase the risk for dementia by 35 percent.
- ▶ This risk jumps to 74 percent with obesity, those having a BMI of 30 or above.
- ▶ Central obesity, or fat around the waist, is particularly bad for the brain. It's defined as a body circumference of 35 inches for women and 40 inches for men.

The Solution



Faithfully adhering to a Mediterranean diet – characterized by high consumption of fruits and vegetables, healthy fats, unrefined grains and fish, moderate consumption of dairy products, poultry and wine, and low consumption of meats and sweets – can significantly reduce risk for dementia. A healthy brain lifestyle also includes food with an adequate supply of omega 3 fatty acids and antioxidants.



Physical, Mental, and Social Activity Stave Off Dementia!

- ▶ Study after study has demonstrated that staying physically active is one of the best ways to protect your brain.
- ▶ Mental activity is equally important to brain health. So exercise your brain!
- ▶ Research has also shown that socially connected people are less likely to develop dementia than their socially isolated peers.

Are You at Risk?



RESEARCH SHOWS...

- ▶ Seniors who exercised three times a week for just 15 minutes reduced their risk for dementia by 32 percent.
- ▶ In the Bronx Aging Study, seniors who engaged most in cognitive activities had 63 percent less risk of dementia.
- ▶ Social isolation is bad for the brain, increasing risk for dementia by 60 percent.

The Solution

Reducing your risk for dementia is easy – just take walks, play challenging board games, and get together with a friends!



We're Here to Help...



For more information and to learn about our services, please contact us!

Alzheimer's Family Services Center
9451 Indianapolis Ave.
Huntington Beach, CA 92646

Phone: 714-593-9630

www.AFSCenter.org

Our mission is to improve quality of life for families challenged by Alzheimer's disease or another dementia through services tailored to meet individual needs.

