OBJECTIVES

• Overview of normal aging
• Positive effect of healthy lifestyle on aging
• Preventive care for healthy aging
WHAT AFFECTS THE AGING BRAIN?

• The brain doesn’t exist in isolation!
• Lifestyle directly affects aging brain
• Other systems directly contribute
• There are “normal” changes with aging:
  • Memory
  • Motor
  • Mental health
NORMAL AGING MEMORY (COGNITIVE FUNCTION)

• Noticeable around age 60, accelerates around age 70

• Common complaints
  • Attention span decreases, difficulty multi-tasking
  • Learning new things takes longer, more focus required
  • “Forgetfulness” – can’t think of a name, word or where you left something (keys, glasses)

• Things to do – adapt and preserve
  • Learn a new skill
  • Volunteer, spend more time in community
  • Calendars, lists, notes
  • Put belongings in the same place
  • Healthy lifestyle!

• DON’T IGNORE SYMPTOMS – see your doctor for a medical evaluation, testing and medication review
PHYSICALLY SLOWING DOWN

• All body systems “slow down” with aging
• Cardiovascular (heart, circulation and lungs)
  • Pump functions decreases -> less exercise stamina
  • Blood vessels stiffen -> high blood pressure
  • Lung capacity decreases -> oxygen absorbed and delivered decreases
• Musculoskeletal (muscles, bones, joints)
  • Muscle mass decreases
  • Bone density decreases -> feeling tired/achy, falls, fractures
  • Joint tissues stiffen, shrink
• Things to do – healthy lifestyle! Keep moving!
• DON’T IGNORE SYMPTOMS – see your doctor for a medical evaluation, testing and medication review
MENTAL HEALTH

• Increased risk for stress intolerance, depression, anxiety
• Aggravating factors
  • Isolation
  • Hearing loss, visual loss
  • Inactive lifestyle
  • Inadequate sleep (quantity and quality)
• Things to do
  • Spend more time in community
  • Seek mental health evaluation and treatment
  • Get vision and hearing checked and corrected
  • Reduce stress effects
  • Healthy lifestyle!
• DON’T IGNORE SYMPTOMS – see your doctor for a medical evaluation, testing and medication review
HEALTHY LIFESTYLE = MOST IMPORTANT!

• Lifestyle accounts for majority of aging changes, genetics only about 25%

• Major lifestyle factors:
  • Healthy activity
  • Healthy diet
  • Healthy habits – sleep, stress
  • Healthy relationships
Preventing Dementia

- Exercise regularly
- Adopt a healthy diet
- Take time to unwind
- Get sufficient & quality sleep
HEALTHY ACTIVITY

KEEP MOVING!

• Cardiovascular fitness (heart, lungs, circulation)
  • Aerobic activities -> Brisk walking, gardening/yard work, housework, jogging, elliptical workout, swimming, aerobics (chair aerobics)
  • Goal – increase heart rate > 120 BPM, 30 minutes each time, ≥ 4x/week

• Muscle and bone fitness
  • Adequate protein (75-100 grams/day) and calcium in diet (1000 mg/day)
  • Weight-bearing activities – walking/jogging, weightlifting, body resistance exercises, calisthenics
  • Goal – 20-30 minutes, ≥ 2x/week

• Joint fitness
  • Avoid sedentary lifestyle (Keep moving! Use it or lose it!)
  • Stretches, yoga
  • Goal – 10-15 minutes, ≥ 4-5 days/week
HEALTHY EATING

• Choose healthy foods
  • Healthy proteins – beans, eggs, yogurt, low-fat meats (fewer red meats, processed meats), low fat dairy
  • Healthy carbohydrates – vegetables (avoid high starches, fried veges), fruits (avoid juices), fresh better than processed; avoid “high fructose corn syrup”
• Healthy preparation – avoid frying and breading meats/veges, use unsaturated cooking oils (olive)
• Limit daily calorie intake – max 1800 cal/day
• Maintain healthy weight
• Healthy snacks – fresh veges, fruit, nuts, unbuttered popcorn; avoid chips, sweets
• Healthy beverages – water, low fat milk, coffee, (NOT sweet!) tea, sugarfree soft drinks
• Limit alcoholic beverages – max 4-5/week
HEALTHY HABITS

• Stress
  • Avoid stress when possible
  • Manage unavoidable stress – limit exposure, take a break, accept help, practice healthy lifestyle (healthy diet and activity)

• Sleep
  • Quantity – minimum 7 hours/night (8-9 is optimal)
  • Quality – “restorative” sleep -> feeling rested after a night's sleep
  • DON’T IGNORE SYMPTOMS – see your doctor for a medical evaluation, testing and medication review (medical conditions - arthritis, neuropathy, depression, anxiety, sleep hygiene, sleep disorders - sleep apnea, restless leg syndrome)
HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

• We don’t do well in isolation!
• Relationships come in many shapes and sizes – family, friends, community organizations
• Healthy relationships reduce isolation, stress and mental health problems
• Participate in community or religious organizations, family time, friendships, volunteer, part-time work
• Stay engaged with a community!
PREVENTIVE CARE

- Preventing or diagnosing medical conditions early improves longevity and may preserve cognitive function.
PREVENTION CHECKLIST

• Healthy lifestyle!

• Reduce/control cardiovascular risk factors – high blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, tobacco use, obesity

• Preventive screening (annual exam, Medicare Wellness visit)
  • Cancer screening
  • Lifestyle screening/counseling
  • Vision, hearing screening
  • Mental health screening
KNOW YOUR MEDS

ASK YOUR DOCTOR...

• Review all medications and non-prescription supplements with your doctor

• Make sure benefit > risk and discontinue if not

• Make sure each is safe – chronic meds may have increased toxic effects due to new medical conditions, new meds

• Make sure dosing is accurate – increasing age may require decreasing dose
Questions?