

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE FOR AN AGING BRAIN

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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
 - Joint tissues stiffen, shrink

->-> feeling tired/achy, falls, fractures
- 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, $\geq 4x/week$
- 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, $\geq 2x/week$
- Joint fitness
 - Avoid sedentary lifestyle (Keep moving! Use it or lose it!)
 - Stretches, yoga
 - Goal – 10-15 minutes, $\geq 4-5$ 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)

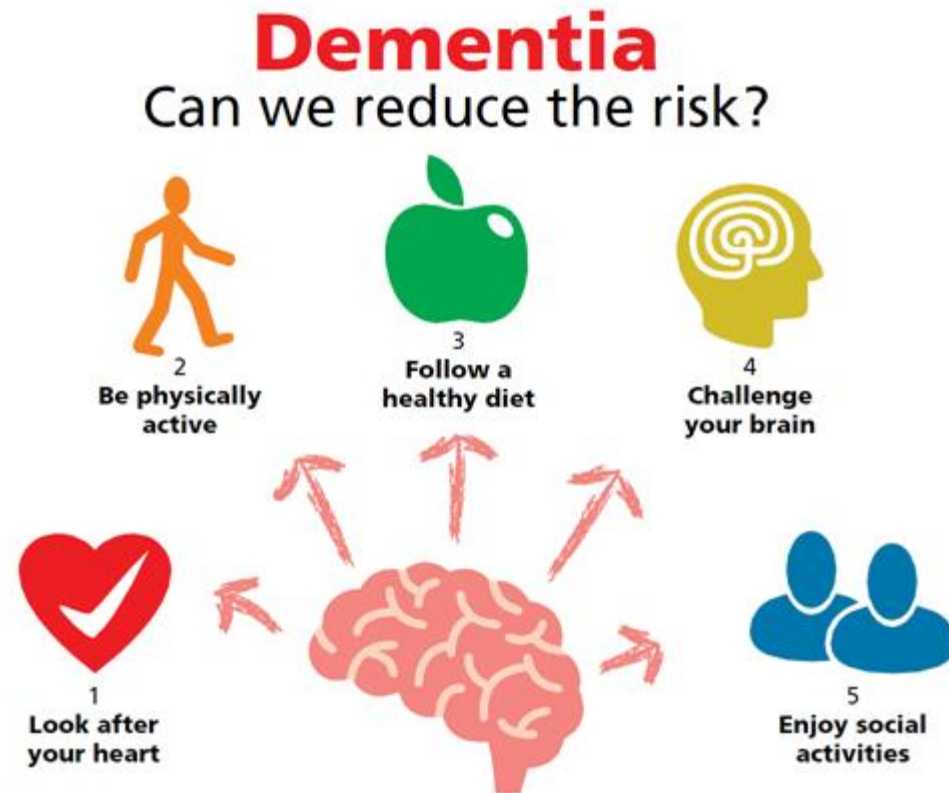
HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

- 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?