



**WELLNESS NEWSLETTER
OCTOBER 2023**

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HIGHLIGHTS for the **October 2023 Newsletter**

The Middle-Aged Secret to Keep Your Brain Healthy

What's the secret to keeping your brain healthy as you age? There's more than one factor linked to brain health. But a recent study found that being overweight increases your risk for developing Alzheimer's and dementia. Here's what you need to know...

Easy on the Fries If You Want to Live Longer

Do you want fries with that? That's a question you can expect to hear at most fast-food restaurants. But if you chow down on fried food a lot, it could raise your risk for heart disease, according to a recent study.

Do THIS 4 Minutes a Day to Lower Cancer Risk

What if there was a way to lower your risk for certain types of cancer by up to 32 percent that only required 4 minutes of your time per day? New research suggests there's one simple thing you can do that can make a difference?

Y-Axis: A Nutty Way to Tip the Scale

Hungry for a simple way to lose weight or maintain a healthy weight? Check out this nutty way to tip the scale in the right direction...

Recipe: Pumpkin Parfait

Looking for a fun fall recipe that's healthier than a bag of Halloween candy? Give this Pumpkin Parfait recipe a try.

Take the October Health Challenge!

Practice Healthy-Brain Habits: Keep your brain actively daily

Ask the Wellness Doctor:

This month Dr. Don Hall answers the question: Can chocolate be part of a healthy diet?



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THE Y AXIS



Nutty Way to Tip the Scale

No, it's not a pill, powder, or gimmicky weight-loss supplement.



But there is a nutty way to lose weight, according to a recent study.⁵

Eat more almonds.

In the study, researchers found that overweight people who ate almonds as part of a healthy diet lost up to 15 pounds and kept it off over a nine-month period.

"Nuts have the added benefit of making you feel fuller for longer, which is always a pro when you're trying to manage your weight," says lead researcher Dr. Sharayah Carter.

COMMENTS?

Send comments to the editor:

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The Middle-Aged Secret to Keep Your Brain Healthy

Being overweight in middle age linked to Alzheimer's and dementia

Take a trip to Tibet. Make your way to the Himalayan mountains. And you're bound to meet some seasoned locals who look a lot younger than they really are. Strike up a conversation. And you'll find they're also mentally sharp, regardless of their age.

They have one of the lowest rates of Alzheimer's in the world. Yet 7 percent of Canadians have the disease. And in the United States, someone is diagnosed with it every 67 seconds.

The weighty-matter of middle age

There's more than one reason for developing this disease. However, a new study suggests that weighing more than you should during middle age may be a factor.¹

- In the study, middle-aged adults who were overweight were more likely to develop Alzheimer's or dementia at some point.
- Having excess weight in middle age may lead to memory problems later on.

You want to protect your memory and lower your risk for Alzheimer's. But a pilgrimage to Tibet may be out of the question.

Fortunately, losing weight or keeping a healthy weight is something you can do now to protect your brain as you get older.

Here are some ways to manage your weight:

- Eat more fruits, vegetables, and fiber-rich whole grains.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Get at least 30 minutes of exercise a day.
- Aim to sleep 7 to 8 hours a night.
- Keep a food journal. Track your calories. And pay attention to portion size.
- Avoid or limit fast food, desserts, candy, and sugar-sweetened drinks.
- Ask for help from your doctor, health coach, or personal trainer.

Maintaining a healthy weight in middle age will protect your health and your memory for years to come.

MORE

Healthy ways to manage your weight
<http://tinyurl.com/ged8c96>

Easy on the Fries If You Want to Live Longer

Eating fried potatoes may increase the risk for early death

Do you want fries with that? It's a typical question you'll get if you hit the drive-thru or step up to the counter at a fast food restaurant. And most people say, "Yes."

- **Pounds of potatoes.** In fact, the National Potato Council says the average person in the United States eats about 112 pounds of potatoes a year.
- **Healthy potatoes.** Less than one-third of those potatoes are baked.
- **Fried not baked.** The rest are in fried form like French fries, hash browns, and potato chips.

And that's a problem. A new study found that people who eat fried potatoes two times a week or more are twice as likely to die early as those who don't.²



- **WHY?** Eating foods made with trans fats, like French fries cooked in oil, raises LDL "bad" cholesterol levels and the risk for heart disease.



Pumpkin Parfait

Looking for a fun fall recipe that's healthier than a bag of Halloween candy? Give this Pumpkin Parfait recipe a try.⁴

Ingredients

- 1 can (15 oz) low-sodium pumpkin
- 3 C low-fat vanilla yogurt
- 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp ground nutmeg

Granola:

- 1/4 C raisins
- 1/2 C quick oats
- 1/2 C rice crisps
- 1 T vegetable oil
- 1/4 C brown sugar

Directions

- Preheat oven to 325 degrees.
- In blender, mix pumpkin until smooth.
- Mix pumpkin, yogurt, and spices in a bowl.
- In another bowl, mix raisins, quick oats, rice crisps, oil, sugar.
- Spread granola on baking pan. Bake 10 minutes.
- Let granola cool to harden. Then, crush into small pieces.
- In 6 medium-size glasses or bowls, spoon layers of pumpkin and granola.
- Serve immediately or refrigerate.

Serves 6. 226 calories per serving.

Do THIS 4 Minutes a Day to Lower Cancer Risk

Short bursts of exercise may lower risk for certain types of cancer

What if there was a simple way to lower your risk for certain types of cancer by up to 32 percent? Would you do it?

Chances are pretty good, you or someone you know has been affected by cancer.

- An estimated 1.9 million cancer cases are diagnosed each year in the United States.
- About 609,000 deaths per year are linked to cancer.

The 4-minute hustle to lower cancer risk

While there is no cure for cancer, new research suggests that just 4 to 5 minutes of vigorous activity may lower the risk for certain types of cancer by 18 to 32 percent.³

And it doesn't even have to be a gym or track workout. Anything that revs up your heart rate for just a few minutes counts, too. This can include:

- Vigorous housework
- Carrying heavy shopping bags
- Bursts of power walking
- Playing high-energy games with the kids



“It's quite remarkable to see that upping the intensity of daily tasks for as little as four to five minutes a day, done in short bursts of around one minute each, is linked to an overall reduction in cancer risk,” says lead researcher Dr. Emmanuel Stamatakis.

Want to lower your risk for cancer? Hustle for just 4 to 5 minutes a day.

MORE

10 tips to lower cancer risk
<https://tinyurl.com/uvfi2wp6>

Easy on the Fries If You Want to Live Longer (continued from page 1)

Potatoes aren't all bad. Researchers believe there are more reasons for the link between fries and early death. Those who eat a lot of fries:

- Are more likely to be overweight or obese
- Aren't very active
- Eat other unhealthy foods.

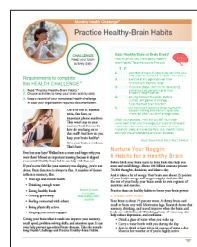
Want to live longer? Limit the French fries and other fried foods. Instead, eat more fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and nuts and seeds. And drink plenty of water.

MORE

How to choose healthier fast food options
<https://tinyurl.com/y7emd3vl>

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Take the October Health Challenge!

Practice Healthy-Brain Habits: Keep your brain actively daily

Ask the Wellness Doctor:

This month Dr. Don Hall answers the question:
Can chocolate be part of a healthy diet?



WELLNESS CHALLENGE

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Practice Healthy-Brain Habits

CHALLENGE

Keep your brain actively daily

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read "Practice Healthy-Brain Habits."
2. Choose activities to keep your brain activity daily
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



Use it or lose it. Baseball trivia, fun facts, or important phone numbers. They won't stay in your memory bank forever. So how do you hang on to that stuff? And how do you keep your brain healthy?

Give your brain a workout. That's how.

Ever lost your keys? Walked into a room and forgot why you were there? Missed an important meeting because it slipped your mind? Healthy brain habits can help with that, too.

If you've ever felt like your memory was slipping, you're not alone. Brain function is always in flux. A number of factors influence memory, like:

- Your age and overall health
- Drinking enough water
- Eating healthy foods
- Getting good sleep
- Feeling connected with others
- Being physically active
- Keeping your mind engaged

Hydrate to boost brain power
<https://tinyurl.com/cejusm5j>

Giving your brain what it needs can improve your memory, recall speed, problem-solving skills, and attention span. It can even help prevent age-related brain diseases. Take the month-long Health Challenge and Practice Healthy-Brain Habits.

Quiz: Healthy Brain or Brain Drain?

How much do you know about healthy brain habits? Take the quiz to find out.



T F

1. Less than 8 hours of sleep a day can limit your brain's ability to store and recall information.
2. Exercise at any age improves brain function and memory recall.
3. If you are obese, your risk for developing dementia is 80 percent higher than a healthy weight person.
4. Solving crossword puzzles, Sudoku puzzles, and games of strategy helps maintain brain function.
5. Your mood and response times needed for decision making and memory recall are improved when you drink enough water.

Check your answers., How did you do? Your brain works best when you challenge your brain to store and recall information and memories. Proper nutrition, hydration, sleep, and exercise help, too. Healthy habits also help prevent dementia and brain diseases.

Answers: 1.True, 2.True, 3.True, 4.True, 5.True

Nurture Your Noggin: 6 Habits for a Healthy Brain

Before birth your brain starts to form links that help you store and recall things. About 100 billion neurons process 70,000 thoughts, decisions, and ideas a day.

And it takes a lot of energy. Your brain uses about 25 percent of your body's energy and oxygen supply. And just like the rest of your body, your brain needs its own regimen of nutrition and exercise.

Practice these six healthy habits to boost your brain power:

1. Drink More Water

Your brain is about 75 percent water. A thirsty brain can't recall or focus very well. Motivation lags. Research shows that memory, thinking, and mood improve when the brain and body are well hydrated.¹ Drinking plenty of water may also help reduce depression, and confusion.

- Drink a glass of water when you wake up
- Carry a water bottle with you during the day
- Aim to drink at least 40 to 64 ounces of water a day. More in hot weather or if you're highly active.

Nurture Your Noggin: 6 Habits for a Healthy Brain (Continued)

2. Eat Brain-Healthy Foods

More than 6 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease. This brain-wasting disease breaks the links between nerve cells. Over time, it causes memory loss and thinking problems. While genes may be a factor, researchers believe dietary habits may hold clues to prevent it.



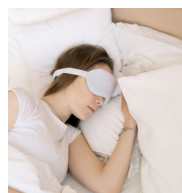
A recent study found that those with the healthiest brains have better diets than those with diagnosed brain and memory problems.²

They eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and other plant-based foods. Examples of brain-healthy eating include The DASH Diet and Mediterranean Diet.

- Eat more plant-based foods like broccoli, spinach, and dark-colored berries and other fruits and vegetables.
- Eat more whole-grain foods like pasta, cereal, and oats.
- Avoid or limit red meats, fried food, and processed foods.

3. Get Your Zzzs

If you don't get enough sleep, you'll probably feel groggy and tired. It's also bad for your brain.



One recent study found that people who don't get enough sleep or sleep too much are more likely to develop age-related memory problems.³ Researchers also found that too much sleep can have a similar effect.

The sweet spot: At least 5.5 hours and no more than 7.5 hours of sleep per night, according to the study. And if you come up short, a nap can help.

Over time, lack of sleep also makes the cells in the body less responsive to insulin. This raises the risk for diabetes and high blood pressure. Both of these problems can damage the brain.

When your brain is short on sleep, is it less able to store memories. And it doesn't get rid of toxins linked to certain brain diseases.⁴

4. Be Social

You and your brain are better off in more ways than one when you're around family and friends.



Research shows that people who have good friendships and social ties are less likely to develop brain diseases as they age. People who are lonely without close social ties are 50 percent more likely to develop dementia.⁵

Positive social contact helps reduce stress hormones in the brain. And it helps improve memory, learning, judgment, language, and intuition.

- Make time to be social.
- Connect with family and friends.
- Use technology tools to stay connected.
- Participate in group activities.

5. Sit Less, Move More

When you're active, your brain releases endorphins that enhance mood and reduce pain. Studies show that exercise also helps people feel less stressed, anxious, or depressed.



Being active can also be a good way to boost self-esteem, improve sleep, and aid in weight loss.⁶

- Take a walk during your break.
- Go to the gym over lunch or after work.
- Use the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Look for ways to be more active.
- Aim to exercise at least 30 to 60 minutes a day.

6. Practice Problem Solving

Solve a crossword. Complete a Sudoku puzzle. Play a game of chess, checkers or other game of strategy. When you

keep your mind engaged by thinking and solving problems, your brain benefits.

Research shows that people are at lower risk of memory loss when they play games that make them think.



- One recent study found that reading, playing games like checkers and puzzles, and writing letters, can delay the onset of Alzheimer's disease by 5 years among older adults.⁷

Why? Learning and problem solving makes the neuron connections in the brain less vulnerable to damage.

- Play games of strategy.
- Learn a new skill or take a class.
- Engage in activities that require you to solve problems.

When you take care of your brain, you'll be able to think faster, have better focus and attention, and remember more.



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Practice Healthy-Brain Habits

CHALLENGE
Keep your brain active daily

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, or add to your digital calendar).
2. Make choices to keep your brain active daily.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions and choices to practice healthy-brain habits.
4. Review your progress at the end of each day, each week, and at the end of the month. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

MONTH:							HC = Health Challenge™	ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary	
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_____ Number of days this month I made healthy-brain choices
 _____ Number of days this month I exercised at least 30 minutes

Other wellness projects completed this month:

 Name _____ Date _____



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ASK THE DOCTOR

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Q. Can chocolate be part of a healthy diet?

A. Yes. But before you devour a candy bar or go for a big slice of chocolate cake, there's something you need to know.

A lot of people believe chocolate is healthy. And it can be.

But here's the problem with eating a lot of chocolate. Most chocolate bars, desserts, and treats have no nutritional value.

Know what they do have? A lot of empty calories and high amounts of sugar and fat.

Nosh your way through a typical chocolate treat, and you're mainly eating the ingredients for future health problems like obesity and diabetes.

But that doesn't mean you have to live your life sans chocolate. Eating a small amount of *dark chocolate* may actually be good for you.

6 Tasty Health Benefits of Dark Chocolate

Hungry for something sweet? Researchers believe flavonols and antioxidants in dark chocolate may help:

1. **Lower** the risk for diabetes and insulin resistance¹



2. **Dilate** blood vessels and arteries to improve blood flow and heart health²
3. **Reduce** stress and inflammation linked to chronic disease³
4. **Support** weight management and lower Body Mass Index³
5. **Control** blood pressure and lower risk of heart disease⁴
6. **Improve** mood, memory, and the immune system⁵

A bite of dark chocolate for better health

If you've got a craving for something sweet and chocolate is on your mind, try dark chocolate. The darker, the better.

One recent meta-analysis found that 45 grams is the ideal amount of chocolate each week.⁶

- You can eat half of a small square (about 6 grams) a day.
- Or, you can eat a whole square 4 days a week.
- It's just enough to help you tap into the health benefits

ASK THE *Wellness* DOCTOR

of dark chocolate without consuming a lot of calories.

- But it does add over 200 calories to your weekly intake, so plan to walk an extra 15 minutes for each square you eat.

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