



Care Partner Information

Tips for Providing Older Adult Care

Lowering the Risk of Alzheimer's Disease

The chances of getting Alzheimer's disease goes up with age. It also goes up if a parent had Alzheimer's disease. Everyone can lower their risk with healthy habits.

The brain and body are connected

The same habits that keep the heart healthy can help to protect the brain:

- Eat healthy foods
- Physical activity
- Staying at a healthy weight
- Don't smoke
- Don't drink too much alcohol.
- Learn new things
- Join in social activities
- Protect the head from injury.

The risk of Alzheimer's disease is lowest in people who do all of these things.

Take care of any chronic diseases

People with diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and heart disease may be more likely to get Alzheimer's disease. This is because the brain needs both oxygen and blood sugar to be healthy. Those with heart problems may not get as much blood flow and oxygen to their brain. Those with type 2 diabetes may not be able to use sugar in the body or the brain in the right way. People with type 2 diabetes may also have some of the same heart problems that increase the risk of Alzheimer's disease. It is a good idea to take medications as the doctor says. See the doctor regularly to make sure blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol are in the healthy range.

Prevent or slow down Alzheimer's disease

Find out more about brain health: www.alz.org or 1-800-272-3900

This Care Partner Information page is part of a series on older adult caregiving tips. They are written to help family and community caregivers, direct care workers and community health representatives care for older adults. Available in English and Spanish at www.aging.arizona.edu

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What?	Why?	How?
Physical Activity	Physical activity raises the heart rate and blood flow to the brain. This brings oxygen, vitamins and minerals that the brain needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get the heart rate up for 30 minutes on most days. Start with 10 minutes at a time, and work up to 30 minutes. • Find an activity that is fun. Trying new activities is good for the body and the mind. • Invite a friend to join.
Eat Healthy	Foods that have lots of nutrients help the body to work better, lowering the chances of getting heart disease, dementia and some cancers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat lots of green leafy vegetables. • Choose healthy fats like olive oil and avocado. • Eat fish, beans and nuts for protein. Limit red meats. • Snack on fruit. • Limit foods that are fried, made with white flour, or have lots of sugar in them.
Prevent head injury	Falls, car crashes and sports can cause brain injury. Brain injury that happens years before may cause dementia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always wear a seatbelt in the car, and drive safely. • Wear helmets when riding a bike, skating, skiing or playing contact sports. • Prevent falls with strength and balance training, such as with Tai Chi or yoga.
Be Social	Spending time with others keeps the brain active and can lower stress, which helps to prevent disease.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan regular activities with friends. • When it is hard to visit someone, call them. • Join a club, or find other group activities in the area. • Be social and get exercise by going to a fitness class.
Keep Learning	Learning new things keeps the brain active and helps it make new connections. This can help slow the signs of dementia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn a new skill or hobby, such as playing piano or photography. • Look for free classes at the library or senior center. • Try new games and puzzles. When winning is easy, find a new game or puzzle to keep the brain active.
Take care of yourself	Take care of chronic diseases and other health problems. This may help to prevent or slow down dementia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take medications as explained by doctors. • Use a pill box and set an alarm to help keep track of what to take and when. • Ask doctors or pharmacists any questions about the disease or medications. Let the doctor know about side effects from medications.

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