

## Five Important Organs of the Human Body – The Brain

### Tips to Help Keep Your Health On Track!

This is the second article in a series on five important organs of the human body; this article is focused on the brain. It will provide you with general information about how to help keep the brain healthy and young. Every brain changes with age and so does mental function. We all fear a decline in our brain’s functioning as we get older; however, this type of impairment is not a certainty. There are ways you can lower your risk of age-related memory loss; for example, embracing healthy lifestyle habits now may help improve your mental health as you age. <sup>(1)</sup>

Overall Brain Health <sup>(1)</sup>	Stay Physically Active <sup>(1)</sup>	Stay Mentally Active <sup>(1)</sup>	Eat Healthy <sup>(1)</sup>	Stay Socially Active <sup>(1)</sup>
<p>There are several tips you can follow to help keep your organs, including your brain, healthy.</p> <p>Here are a few tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get preventive exams.</li> <li>• Know your weight, blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol.</li> <li>• If you have diabetes, manage it properly.</li> <li>• Stop smoking if you smoke; don’t start if you don’t.</li> <li>• Avoid using alcohol to excess.</li> <li>• Don’t abuse drugs.</li> <li>• Make sure to get enough sleep because sleep conditions, such as apnea and insomnia may cause problems with memory loss and cognitive thinking.</li> <li>• Try to minimize the stress in your life.</li> <li>• If you experience anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues, seek professional treatment.</li> </ul>	<p>Physical activity is not only very important to your overall health, but it is especially good for brain health and lowering your risk for cognitive decline. Blood flow increases with exercise as does oxygenation of the brain.</p> <p>Exercise may also help prevent strokes, lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels, and help to reduce mental stress.</p> <p>To protect your head from injury, always wear a sports helmet when performing certain physical activities like biking, skiing, rollerblading, or riding a motorcycle.</p> <p>Physical activity can be as simple as taking a walk every day. Other forms you may wish to consider are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk the dog.</li> <li>• Swim, bike, or hike.</li> <li>• Practice yoga.</li> <li>• Take tennis lessons.</li> <li>• Do yard work.</li> </ul>	<p>Never stop using your brain. The more you exercise your brain during your lifetime, the slower your mental decline may be and the sharper your thought process may be as you age.</p> <p>Not only does using your brain protect the various connections among the brain cells when you are physically active, it may even help grow new cells when you are mentally active.</p> <p>Some of the ways you may keep your brain mentally active are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform memory exercises such as crossword puzzles, jigsaw puzzles, and other puzzles.</li> <li>• Go to the museum, attend lectures, or see some plays.</li> <li>• Read, keep a daily journal, or write poems.</li> <li>• Enroll in a course at a community college or local adult education center; pursue anything that interests you.</li> <li>• Take up gardening or landscaping.</li> </ul>	<p>Not only is a healthy diet good for your overall health, including your heart, but it may also help keep your brain healthy.</p> <p>Eat fruits and vegetables bright in color, citrus fruits, whole grains, and cold-water fish. Consume only healthy, polyunsaturated plant-based fats like olive oil instead of saturated fats like butter.</p> <p>Try and include the following brain-healthy foods into your daily diet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blueberries</li> <li>• Citrus fruits, such as oranges, grapefruits, tangerines and limes</li> <li>• Nuts and seeds</li> <li>• Avocados</li> <li>• Beans</li> <li>• Dark chocolate</li> <li>• Cold-water fish, such as wild salmon, herring, tuna, mackerel, and sardines</li> <li>• Whole grains, such as whole wheat-bread, brown rice, and oatmeal</li> </ul>	<p>People are meant to socialize and friends, old or new, do more than keep you company. If you maintain an active social life, you may lower your risk for developing dementia as you age.</p> <p>The more socially connected you are, the more you may increase the connections between your neurons (brain cells), which also happens with physical and mental activity. If your social life is lacking, some changes you can make are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform volunteer work.</li> <li>• Join a book club or a hobby club, such as walking, hiking, or cycling.</li> <li>• Take turns hosting a weekly get together with a group of friends to play cards or to have lunch.</li> <li>• Write letters or use the phone to keep in touch with friends and family.</li> <li>• Take a cooking class or join a golf league.</li> </ul>

<sup>(1)</sup> [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

This is informational only; not a replacement for the medical advice of your physician.