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Alzheimer's and Brain Health

Alzheimer's disease is an irreversible, progressive brain disease that slowly destroys memory and thinking skills. Eventually, the disease will prevent one from carrying out the simplest of daily tasks. It is not a normal part of aging.

While Alzheimer's disease cannot be prevented, slowed, or cured, there are things you can do to live an overall brain-healthy lifestyle. Adopt these practices early and continue them throughout your life to help reduce your risk of cognitive decline as you age. The Alzheimer's Association offers 10 ways to love your brain.

1. **Break a sweat.** Get at least 150 minutes of exercise per week.
2. **Hit the books.** Take a class online or in your community.
3. **Butt out.** Quit smoking now, as this increases your risk for many health conditions including cognitive decline.
4. **Follow your heart.** Risk factors for heart disease also increase your risk for cognitive decline. A heart-healthy lifestyle is also good for your brain.
5. **Heads up!** Wear a helmet, use your seatbelt, and prevent falls. Protecting your head can help reduce your risk of cognitive decline.
6. **Fuel up right** with a healthy and balanced diet.
7. **Catch some Zzz's.** A lack of sleep contributes to memory loss and thinking ability. Try to get 9 hours per night.
8. **Take care of your mental health.** Depression could be linked to an increased risk of cognitive decline.
9. **Buddy up.** Strong social connections throughout life may support better brain health. Enjoy time with friends, volunteer,

engage in hobbies, and be part of your community.

10. Stump yourself. Challenge your brain with card games, puzzles, learning a new skill – these have brain-boosting benefits.

Learn more about this disease and brain health from the Alzheimer’s 101 fact sheet, ksre-learn.com/MF3365



Lessons from the Blue Zones®

Blue Zones® are regions in the world where people live measurably longer and healthier lives. Dan Buettner, a National Geographic Fellow and multiple New York Times bestselling author, was able to pinpoint five longevity hotspots around the world and identify nine lifestyle traits that were common in these regions. While genes determine 20 to 25% of your overall health quality, lifestyle habits and the environment have a much greater influence on how well or long you live.

What do long-lived people have in common? Scientists have determined that it is not education, income, or profession. This graphic illustrates the Power Nine® traits and the five Blue Zones® regions.

Of particular interest is the island of Ikaria, Greece, where residents have half the rate of heart disease as Americans and almost no dementia.

So, how are Ikarians avoiding Alzheimer’s disease? Several aspects of their lifestyle could be a key. They eat a whole-food, plant-based diet (no processed foods), they have very strong social connections, and they are on the move. Ikaria is a mountainous village and just about everything they do includes a trip uphill.

You can learn more about the Blue Zones® and the Power 9® from 2020 Walk Kansas newsletters at www.walkkansas.org/newsletter/2020.html and at www.bluezones.com/

POWER 9®

Nine healthy lifestyle habits shared by people who have lived the longest.

DOWN SHIFT	PURPOSE	PLANT SLANT	WINE @ 5	FAMILY FIRST	80% RULE	MOVE NATURALLY	RIGHT TRIBE	BELONG
Improve your overall wellness by finding a stress relieving strategy that works for you.	Wake up with purpose each day to add up to 7 years to your life.	Put less meat and more plants on your plate.	Responsibly enjoy a glass of wine with good friends each day.	Invest in spending time with family and add up to 6 years to your life.	Eat mindfully and stop when 80% full.	Find ways to move more! You'll burn calories without thinking about it.	Surround yourself with people who support positive behaviors.	Belong to a faith-based community and attend services 4 times a month to add 4 – 14 years to your lifespan.

Adapted from The Blue Zones Project by Healthways

Eat the Med Way

The Mediterranean way of eating is one of the healthiest in the world. Studies show that eating and living the Med Way can reduce your risk of developing certain diseases, including Alzheimer's disease, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and some types of cancer. Other benefits include lower blood pressure and weight loss, and improved eye health by protecting against macular degeneration.

Eating the Med Way includes lots of fruits and vegetables, healthful fats like olive and canola oil, whole grains, fish, seafood, herbs and spices, and some lean meat. This style of eating is not about cutting calories and restricting certain foods, as many popular diet trends in America today emphasize.

The Med Way is a way of life that includes enjoying a wide variety of whole, nourishing foods with friends and family, and practicing an active lifestyle. Eating the Med Way doesn't have to be expensive or complicated, and you don't have to buy only fresh fruits and vegetables – canned and frozen will work and they are all good.

Here are some tips to get you started eating the Med Way:

- » Eat more fruits and vegetables, and try to get 7 to 10 servings of these a day.
- » Choose whole grains and switch to whole-grain bread, cereal, and pasta.
- » Use healthy fats. Instead of butter, try olive or canola oil. Choose olive oil spread, instead of butter, and olive oil mayonnaise.
- » Reduce red meat and eat more fish, poultry, and beans. Keep portions small and choose lean meats.
- » Have some dairy, such as low-fat Greek or plain yogurt and small portions of a variety of cheeses.
- » Add some spice. Eating the Med Way means boosting flavor with herbs and spices, and using less salt. This recipe for marinated tomatoes is a great way to add flavor and freshness to meals. Try some of the suggestions to use them and add some of your own.

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Marinated Tomatoes

Makes 4 Servings

These are so full of flavor! You might want to put them on everything!

Ingredients:

- ½ pound ripe cherry tomatoes, quartered
- ¼ red onion, quartered and sliced thin
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- 1 lemon, juiced
- Ground black pepper, to taste
- Fresh basil (optional)

Directions:

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Peel onion and garlic. Rinse onion, garlic, tomatoes and basil under cold running water. Quarter tomatoes, quarter and slice onions thinly; combine in a bowl. Using the flat side of your knife, smash peeled garlic into a paste. Season with salt and add to the veggies.
3. Add olive oil, vinegar, lemon juice, black pepper, and fresh basil if desired. Mix to combine.
4. Allow tomatoes to sit at room temperature for 1 to 2 hours, stirring occasionally. Enjoy immediately! Refrigerate any leftovers.

Ways to enjoy marinated tomatoes:

- » Fantastic as a summer salad topping that doubles as a dressing!
- » Top toasted crostini or toasted rye bread as an appetizer or side for soup.
- » Tasty topping for avocado toast.
- » Flavorful side dish for grilled favorites.
- » Topping for chicken, shrimp, steak, or salmon.

Nutrition Information for 1 serving:

150 Calories; 15 g fat (0g trans fat, 2 g saturated fat); 4 g carbohydrates; 1 g protein; 1 g fiber; 80 mg sodium.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

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