

WELLNESS WEDNESDAY

Keep this in mind...

As we get older, it's not uncommon to notice small shifts in cognition, like missing a routine exit while driving or forgetting where the keys are. These slips are usually nothing to be concerned about, but can be a reminder that we need to put in some effort to keep our mental functioning sharp.

Even with full cognitive capacities, it can be easy to forget that our minds rely on the health of our bodies (the brain) to function properly. That being the case, it should be no surprise that the same things we can do to support heart, blood vessel, and gut health also work exceedingly well to keep our brains functioning.

Sleep

Yes, the first thing we cut out when we get busy is actually one of the most important things we can do for brain health. Most of us need about 7-8 hours a night to allow our brains to consolidate and store information we learn into long-term memory. That time is also necessary for the brain's glymphatic system to flush out waste products, including Alzheimer's disease-related toxins.

Nutrition

Inflammation may play a role in the development of Alzheimer's disease and also vascular dementia, which is where the brain is deprived of blood flow with silent mini-strokes over time. Reducing sugary foods and animal-derived fats from the diet can improve vascular system health.

A Mediterranean-style diet that prioritizes vegetables, fruits, beans, whole grains, nuts, and fish is associated with lower risks of cognitive decline. Specific foods that may be particularly helpful include dark leafy greens, berries, and foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids like salmon, flax seeds, and walnuts.

Exercise

Exercise programs can dramatically reduce or delay the potential for cognitive disorders. Regular physical activity improves blood flow to the brain, which supplies the oxygen and nutrients necessary for optimal functioning. It also promotes new brain cell growth and enlarges the areas associated with the storage and retrieval of memories.

It is never too late to start either— people at any age or cognitive functioning can still gain significant benefits from these lifestyle strategies.

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/embrace-healthy-habits-for-a-robust-memory>



“The tests show you’re not losing your memory. Are you doing anything worth remembering?”

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Connect with Employee Wellness!

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