

June is National Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month

June is National Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month. While a frightening disease for the afflicted and their caregivers alike, there are changes in lifestyle that may reduce one's risk of developing Alzheimer's Disease and other forms of dementia.

Doing our best to prevent Alzheimer's Disease and dementia involves keeping our brain healthy with good flow of blood and oxygen. So, one part of keeping our brain healthy is keeping our heart healthy too.

Not only can you feel assured that these improvements to your lifestyle will help reduce the risk of cognitive decline, they will likely improve other aspects of your health, as they encourage weight loss, reduce risk of cancer, and improve mental health.

Get Moving- As mentioned, keeping the brain fed with oxygen and nutrients is important for brain health. We can keep our

hearts strong enough to do that with regular physical activity or movement that increases our heart rate. Walking is a great way to start. Discuss your plan with your doctor.

Stop Smoking- There are numerous negative affects of smoking from lung cancer to heart disease and high blood pressure. Also, research shows that smoking increases one's risk of cognitive decline. Quitting smoking would be very beneficial to your health.

Remember the Big Picture- While we may be motivated to reduce our risk of Alzheimer's or dementia, we may forget about our other chronic health conditions. Managing several conditions like obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes can be overwhelming, but each con-



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dition can affect your heart and brain health. If you have you have let yourself "slide" about your other health conditions, start over and talk to your doctor. Also, eating a nutritious diet that includes fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids (tuna, sardines, nuts, seeds, canola oil, soybean oil, or flaxseed oil) could help control chronic disease.

Getting Enough Sleep: Good News is that sleep is very important for overall health as it is important to manage stress, anxiety, and our appetite. Those that struggle with insomnia or sleep apnea need to discuss it with your health care provider to maintain their health as best they can.

There are changes we can make to keep our brain healthy and reduce our risk of Alzheimer's Disease and other forms of dementia. Fortunately, those same changes could have positive effects on the rest of our health.