

Steps to Keeping And Maintaining Brain Health

Your role is to be active in the treatment process and to have hope.

Accurate Information

- Educate yourself. Read books such as *The Alzheimer's Prevention Program: Keep Your Brain Healthy for the Rest of Your Life* by Gary Small, MD, and Gigi Vorgan and *The 36-Hour Day: A Family Guide to Caring for People Who Have Alzheimer's Disease, Related Dementias, and Memory Loss* by Nancy L. Mace and Peter V. Rabins.

Diet

- Eat heart healthy. If the Mediterranean diet is good for the heart, it's good for the brain. Have a dietitian assist you in developing a plan.
- Drink six to eight glasses of water daily and one glass of an alcoholic beverage for women and two for men five to seven days per week. Red wine may be preferable.

Brain

- Do pencil and paper tasks, including crossword puzzles, word searches, and word scrambles, either individually or in a group. Group activities also encourage social participation.
- Use Brainiversity software, which incorporates training for language, memory, math, and analysis.
- Learn a new skill. If you're left-handed, use your right hand and vice versa.

Body

- Exercise for 30 minutes at least three times weekly (can be divided into two 15-minute or three 10-minute sessions during a day). Check with your health care provider before starting.
- Protect your head. Buckle up when driving, and wear a helmet if appropriate.

Undergo Cognitive Assessment

- Establish baseline cognitive information. Get a complete physical exam, including a cognitive screening (Mini Mental Status Exam or the Montreal Assessment).
- Address any issues discovered as part of the physical exam.
- Repeat the physical exam any time you believe there is a change in your memory, thinking, reasoning, or performing any of your daily or work activities.

Work Toward Cognitive Maintenance

- Buy inexpensive, easy-to-use software such as Brainiversity.
- Select pencil and paper tasks that are not too easy nor too difficult.