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1

healthy living for

your brain and body

tips from the latest research

• Identify the reasons for taking care of yourself as

you age

• List strategies to age well in the following areas:

– Physical health and exercise

– Diet and nutrition

– Cognitive activity

– Social engagement

• Make your own plan for healthy aging using the

Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body: Tips

from the Latest Research workbook

2

Program overview

• Aging well depends on your:

– Genes

– Environment

– Lifestyle

• Lifestyle choices may

help keep your body and

brain healthy

3

Aging and health

• The brain is the control

center of the body

• There are 100 billion nerve

cells, or neurons, creating

a branching network

• Signals traveling through

the brain form memories,

thoughts and feelings

• Alzheimer’s disease

destroys brain cells

4

The brain and how it works

• Heart and brain are interrelated

– What you do to protect your heart can also

help your brain continue to operate at its best

• The brain needs blood flow

– The brain depends on oxygen and adequate

blood flow to work well

– 25% of blood from every heartbeat goes to

the brain

5

Heart-brain connection

• Dementia is caused by many different diseases

and conditions

• It is not part of normal aging

• Alzheimer’s disease is most common cause of

dementia

• Known risks for Alzheimer’s includes age,

genetics, head injury, cardiovascular factors and

fewer years of formal education

• Therapies for Alzheimer’s can treat symptoms,

but cannot cure, prevent or even slow disease

progression

6

Dementia and Alzheimer’s

2

7

Taking care of yourself as you age

8

Physical health and exercise

What we know

• Cardiovascular activity may reduce your

risk of cognitive decline

• Regular and vigorous exercise leads to

increased blood flow – other physical

activities may also yield benefits

• There is no single recipe

9

Physical health and exercise

Woodley discusses developing exercise

as a habit in his life.

10

What we can do

• Do something you like

• Start out small

• Move safely

• Get your heart rate up

• Ask friends to join you

• Check with your doctor

before you start

11

Physical health and exercise

12

Physical health and exercise

What we can do

• Stop smoking

• Avoid excess alcohol

• Get adequate sleep

• Avoid head injury

• Manage stress

• Treat depression

• Visit your doctor regularly

3

What we can do

Monitor numbers and take

action

• Blood pressure

• Blood sugar

• Weight

• Cholesterol

13

Physical health and exercise

14

Diet and nutrition

15

Diet and nutrition

What we know

• What’s good for the heart may also be good for

the brain

• Nutritious food is fuel for the brain

• Following some dietary guidelines can reduce

your risk of heart disease, cancer, Parkinson’s

disease, Alzheimer’s disease, stroke and

diabetes

Martha Clare Morris, Sc.D., is the

Director of the Section of Nutrition and

Epidemiology in the Department of

Internal Medicine at Rush University.

16

EAT

• Vegetables

• Fruits

• Nuts, beans and

whole grains

• Lean meats, fish and

poultry

• Vegetable oils

AVOID

• Saturated/trans fats

• Processed foods

• Solid fat, sugar and

salt

• Deep-fried foods

• Unhealthy fast foods

What we can do

17

Diet and nutrition

What we can do

• Consult reputable sources about:

– Dietary supplements

– Vitamins

• Work with your doctor

18

Diet and nutrition

4

19

Cognitive activity

What we know

• Keeping your mind active forms new

connections among brain cells

• Cognitive activity encourages blood flow to the

brain

• Mentally stimulating activities may possibly

maintain or even improve cognition

• Engaging in formal education will keep your

brain healthy and can provide protection against

developing dementia

20

Cognitive activity

David Bennett, MD, is the Director

of the Rush Alzheimer ’s Disease Center

in Chicago.

21

What we can do

• Read books and articles that challenge and

inspire you

• Complete puzzles and play games that are

challenging for you

• Learn new skills or hobbies

• Engage in ongoing learning

22

Cognitive activity

23

Social engagement

What we know

• Social engagement is associated with living

longer with fewer disabilities

• Staying engaged in the community offers you an

opportunity to maintain your skills

• Remaining both socially and mentally active may

support brain health and possibly delay the

onset of dementia

24

Social engagement

5

What we can do

• Visit with friends and family

• Engage with others

• Stay involved in the community

• Volunteer outside the home

• Join a group or club

25

Social engagement

Take care of your health

• Get moving

• Eat right

• Keep your mind active

• Stay connected with others

Combine all four to achieve maximum benefits

26

Putting all four pieces together

William Thies, Ph.D., is the Senior

Scientist in Residence in the Medical and

Scientific Relations Department of the

Alzheimer ’s Association’s National office.

27

• Begin today

• Start small and build

• Do what you enjoy and stick

with it

• Make healthy choices

• Make a plan

• Get support from others

• Have fun

28

What you can do NOW

• If it’s too good to be true – it’s probably not true!

• Be cautious when you hear huge promises or

reports of miracle cures

• Do thorough research

• Consult trusted, reputable professionals

– Your doctor

– Your local pharmacist

– The Alzheimer’s Association

29

Be a savvy consumer

30

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800.272.3900

 Alzheimer ’s Navigator

 Community Resource Finder

 ALZConnected

 Alzheimer ’s and Dementia

Caregiver Center

 Safety Center

 24/7 Helpline – Available all

day every day

alz.org/findus

training.alz.org

 Support groups, education

programs and more

available in communities

nationwide

 Free online education

programs available at

training.alz.org

Contact us – we can help

6

31

Get involved

advocate

volunteer

32

Additional resources

Programs in community

- Local Area Agency on Aging

- Local senior centers

- Community park programs

- Local health clubs, YMCAs

and YWCAs

National resources

- National Institutes of Health/

National Institute on Aging

- “What’s on Your Plate?”

- “Go4Life”

- Administration on

Community Living

- “Brain Health as You Age”

- U.S. Department of Agriculture:

Cooperative Extension System

- Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention

Alzheimer ’s Association

We’re here. All day, every day.

24/7 Helpline: 800.272.3900

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Questions?

35 34