



Boost Brain Health

Thinking about your mental fitness? Many everyday habits and conditions can impact our brain power — up or down. Memory lapses can occur at any age, and aging alone is generally not a cause of mental decline.

When significant memory loss occurs as we age, it is likely due to physical disorders, brain injury or neurological illness. Many studies indicate we can help protect our brain health and reduce dementia risk with basic good health habits. Do your best to:

- **Stay physically active.** People who regularly exercise throughout life are less likely to experience a decline in mental function as they age and have a lower risk of developing dementia, including Alzheimer's disease.
- **Get adequate sleep.** For body and brain health, we need seven to nine consecutive hours of sleep every 24 hours.
- **Manage stress and guard brain health and recall.** Your brain is similar to a muscle; use it or lose it. Choose enjoyable mental activities that may boost brain power, such as doing crossword puzzles, reading for learning or taking classes.
- **Socialize.** Regular interaction with family, friends, coworkers and others helps us manage stress or depression; both may contribute to memory loss.
- **Choose a Mediterranean-style diet.** Studies suggest those who do may be less likely to develop cognitive decline compared to people who follow a typical Western diet. Foods in the Mediterranean eating pattern include vegetables, fruit, whole grains, legumes, fish, olive oil, dairy, chicken, eggs and herbs, while reducing highly processed foods, sweets and red meat.

Habits to avoid: If you drink, limit alcohol use to no more than one drink a day for women or two drinks for men. Don't smoke. And avoid long periods of sitting. Get up and move frequently.

Celebrate Healthy Eating

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Holiday season is a time to celebrate with family and friends, and many events revolve around food.

Sometimes this can be challenging for people who have special dietary needs or follow a rigid eating pattern. The influx of treats, sweets and celebrations focused on eating can be overwhelming.

Here are five tips on how to manage the festive season:



1. **Remember moderation.** You may be invited to many holiday events, and it's nice to enjoy a decadent treat at each party. Moderation allows you to enjoy small portions without overdoing it. Plan ahead, pick your favorites and savor them.

2. **Slow down.** When conversation (and alcohol) is flowing, it's easy to become distracted, ignore fullness cues and eat too much too quickly. Practice portion control with your first plate of food. Take your time with every bite.



3. **Give yourself permission to indulge.** While accommodating any food intolerances, make sure to enjoy some holiday favorites, too. Mix nutrient-dense foods, such as turkey and vegetables, with side dishes, such as candied yams and stuffing, so you can enjoy a bit of everything.

4. **Don't skip meals.** You may think you should save up your calories for a festive dinner by passing on breakfast or lunch, but this often backfires. It can make you ravenous and grumpy by dinnertime, forcing you to overeat. Instead, eat sensibly all day long, and enjoy your meal.



5. **Bring a dish.** If you are concerned about meal choices to accommodate your needs, ask your host about making your own additions to the meal. Hosts are usually happy to have an extra vegetable dish, salad or protein option. Remember to make enough for everyone.

Tobacco: Quit to Win

Cigarette smoking is a leading cause of death in the U.S., taking nearly a half million lives every year, including deaths from secondhand smoking. That's about one in five deaths due to preventable diseases caused by smoking. It is also linked to nearly half of the deaths from 12 types of cancer combined.

Fortunately, the number of cigarette smokers continues to decline. The number of smokers has dropped from nearly 21 of every 100 adults, or 20.9% (age 18 and older) in 2005 to about 13 of every 100 adults (12.5%) in 2020. Among youth (12 to 17 years old) who smoked, 44% have quit smoking cigarettes since 2013.



The Great American
Smokeout is November 17.



Most smokers want to kick cigarettes and there is help for saying goodbye to tobacco and vaping for good. One common approach is a combination of medicine, emotional support and changing lifestyle habits. Here are three great sources to help motivate you:

- See your health care provider for guidance.
- Get quitting advice and tools at smokefree.gov.
- Visit cancer.org for phone and app quitline counseling services that show a high rate of quitting success.

Quitters share one thing in common: They have a strong desire to be tobacco-free.

Q: OK to exercise when sick?



A: Mild or moderate exercise is generally considered okay if you have a cold or upper respiratory infection. But if your symptoms are more severe than a stuffy nose, sneezing and sore throat, you should avoid physical activity, especially if you have a fever, fatigue or body aches. Frequent coughing, chest congestion, wheezing, nausea and abdominal pain are other signs that indicate you should skip exercise.

Decrease intensity and time. Even with the common cold, it's wise to cut back on regular physical activity. Instead of pushing yourself, do less than usual. Exercising at your normal pace when you're more than mildly sick may worsen the illness or cause an injury.

What to do if you have COVID-19: At least two weeks of rest are recommended for people recovering from the virus. Get your health care provider's advice before gradually resuming physical activity.

— Elizabeth Smoots, MD

Type 2 Diabetes: Are You at Risk?



November
is Diabetes
Month.



Diabetes is a complex disease that affects your body's primary source of energy — glucose (sugar). Most people with diabetes have type 2, in which the body doesn't use the hormone insulin properly.

When this happens, glucose accumulates in your bloodstream, leading to serious health complications. The longer you've had type 2, the higher your risk for medical side effects.

What are your chances of developing type 2 diabetes?

It depends on multiple factors, including your genes and lifestyle. While you can't change your family history, age or ethnicity, you can control lifestyle risk factors. You are more likely to develop type 2 if you are physically inactive, eat mostly ultra-processed foods and are overweight or obese. Other risks include:

- Age 45 or older.
- A family history of diabetes.
- High blood pressure.
- Low HDL (good) cholesterol or high LDL (bad) cholesterol.
- A history of gestational diabetes or giving birth to a baby weighing nine pounds or more.

To learn more, search for **risk** at diabetes.org.



What are symptoms of type 2 diabetes? Common symptoms include increased thirst, frequent urination and unintended weight loss. Overall, symptoms can be mild and develop slowly for several years; many people will have no symptoms. You may not be aware of the disease until you have related health problems, including blurred vision, heart trouble or circulation problems.

Managing diabetes requires healthy eating, weight control and being physically active.

Your health care provider may prescribe insulin, other injectable medications or oral diabetes medicines. You'll need to eat healthy, exercise regularly and keep your blood pressure and cholesterol close to your provider-recommended targets, and get regular screening for related health problems.

Note: Due to production lead time, this issue may not reflect the current COVID-19 situation in some or all regions of the U.S. For the most up-to-date information visit coronavirus.gov.

The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **Conquer That Cough**, is at personalbest.com/extras/22V11tools.



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