

MINIMIZING RISK OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE THROUGH DIET AND EXERCISE

In partnership with POTENTRx

February 2015

What is Alzheimer's Disease?

Alzheimer's disease is a type of dementia that results in problems with memory, cognition, and behavior. This disease is caused by unknown factors that lead to deteriorated brain function, slowly worsening over time.

Know Your Facts!

Q: Is Alzheimer's a normal process of aging?

A: No, although aging is the greatest known risk factor for Alzheimer's, normal aging does not cause this disease. Most people with Alzheimer's are 65 years or older, though there are some cases of Alzheimer's in people in their 40's and 50's. This is known as early-onset Alzheimer's.

Q: How common is Alzheimer's?

A: There are over 5 million people living with Alzheimer's. Alzheimer's is the most common type of dementia, accounting for 60-80% of all cases.

Q: Who is at risk for developing Alzheimer's disease?

A: Women are at a higher risk of Alzheimer's.; nearly 2/3 of Americans with dementia are women. In their 60's, women have a 1 in 6 chance of developing Alzheimer's, while men only have a 1 in 11 chance.

Q: Who is affected by Alzheimer's disease?

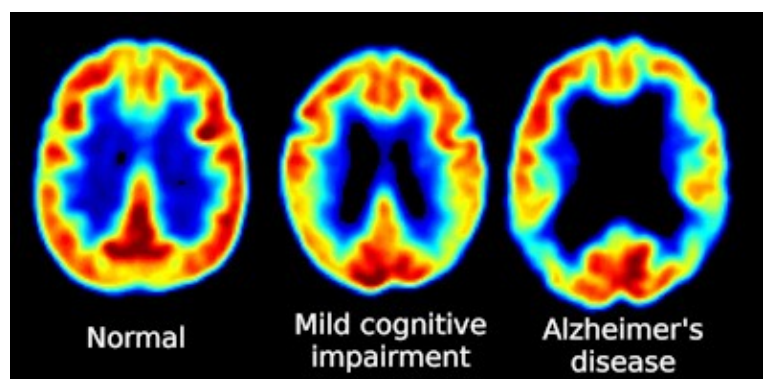
A: Alzheimer's not only affects the individual afflicted by the disease, but also their family and caregivers. Most people with Alzheimer's will need some form of assisted living as the disease progresses into the later stages. Those afflicted will begin to feel disoriented and confused about time, places, and events. They can also have difficulty speaking, swallowing and walking during later stages. Due to this, Alzheimer's is the most expensive condition in the nation, costing the US about \$214 billion in 2014.

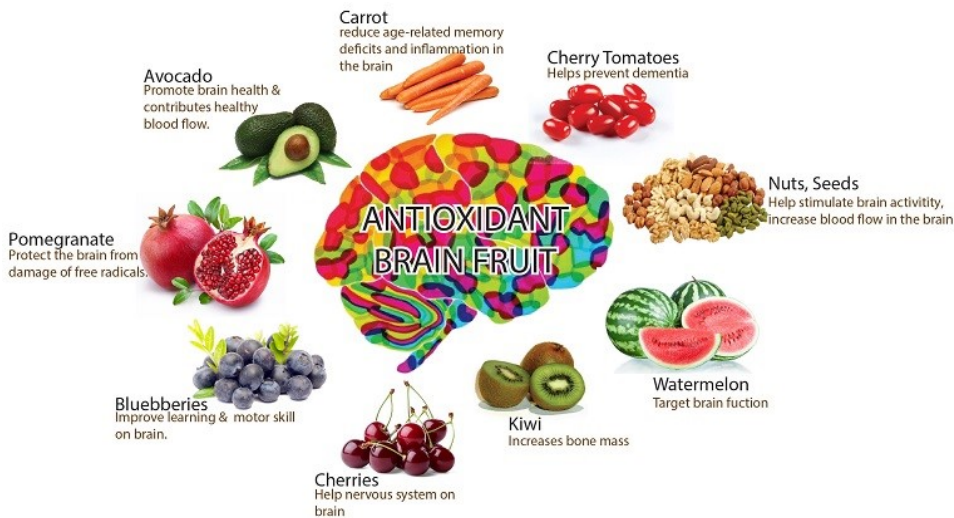
Q: Is there anything I can do to decrease my risk of developing Alzheimer's?

A: Yes! There are modifiable risk factors that contribute to Alzheimer's disease. Please refer to the reverse side for lifestyle changes that can help prevent Alzheimer's.

Alzheimer's disease is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States.

Alz.org, 2014





What Can Lifestyle Changes Do For Alzheimer's Disease?

Studies have linked certain lifestyle changes to a decreased risk of cognitive disorder development—the most effective being increased amounts of physical activity.

Diet also plays a huge role in supporting good brain health. Eating the recommended amount of antioxidants is key for your brain to maintain its high level of activity. The brain uses up to 25% of your body's energy, but only makes up about 2% of your body's total mass. Furthermore, when the brain uses energy, it creates damaging byproducts. The effects of these byproducts can be combated by antioxidants.

Your heart health also effects your brain health. The risk of developing Alzheimer's is increased by many of the same factors that damage the heart and blood vessels, such as hypertension, heart disease, stroke, and high cholesterol. To maximize your brain and heart health, you should eat a healthy diet like the DASH diet or the Mediterranean diet, and participate in the recommended amount of exercise.

Factors of Alzheimer's

While its cause remains undetermined, the following are known to increase risk for Alzheimer's:

Modifiable Risk Factors

Lack of physical activity, hypertension, and poor cardiovascular health.

Non-Modifiable Risk Factors

Family history of Alzheimer's, genetics, increasing age, prior head injury, and ethnicity (Latinos and African-Americans at higher risk).

What Can Exercise Do For Alzheimer's Disease?

Studies have shown that the earlier you begin exercising regularly, the less likely you will be to develop cognitive impairments later in life. Even if you do not begin exercising until your 30's or 50's, your chance of developing cognitive impairments is still significantly reduced. The intensity of exercise also plays a role on the effects on developing Alzheimer's. The chance of developing Alzheimer's is decreased by 45% if you exercise at a moderate to heavy intensity, rather than a light intensity (light activity includes sports such as bowling or golf; moderate activity includes yard work or walking your dog; heavy activity includes major house work or intense sports like running). In order to see benefits, you should exercise for a minimum of 150 minutes per week.

