



## How to keep your brain sharp as you age



**S**o you've noticed some changes in your thinking.

Perhaps you often misplace your keys or have trouble coming up with the right word in conversations. But how do you know if these changes are a normal part of getting older, or if they might be pointing to a health problem such as dementia?

**How Your Brain Changes as You Get Older** Your brain's volume gradually shrinks as you get older. When this occurs, some of the nerve cells in your brain can shrink or lose con-

nections with other nerve cells. Blood flow within your brain slows somewhat as you age, too. These age-related changes are thought to be behind the differences in cognitive function many people notice as they age. Everyone has lapses in memory from time to time, but significant memory loss is not a normal part of getting older. It's important to talk with your doctor if you or a loved one is experiencing memory loss and other cognitive symptoms that interfere with normal activities and relationships.

**7 Tips for Staying Mentally Sharp as a Senior** Promising research indicates that taking the following steps can help keep your mind sharp as you age:

**Control cholesterol problems and high blood pressure.** These conditions can increase your risk for heart disease and stroke, which are thought to contribute to the development of certain types of dementia. Cardiovascular health — having healthy blood sugar, cholesterol levels, and blood pressure, along with being physically active, eating a nutritious diet, maintaining a healthy weight, and not smoking — was associated with better cognitive function in a study published in *PLoS One*.

**Don't smoke or drink excessively.** Because these are both seen as putting you at increased risk for dementia, kick the habit if you smoke and, if you drink, do so only in moderation.

**Exercise regularly.** Regular physical activity is thought to help maintain blood flow to the brain and reduce your risk for conditions such as high blood pressure that are associated with the development of dementia. Consistent vigorous exercise helps lower the risk for dementia, according to a study published in the *Annals of Medicine* in 2015.

**Eat a healthy diet.** Researchers have found strong evidence that vitamin E, B vitamins, and omega-3 fatty acids could help prevent dementia, along with avoiding saturated fat, according to an article published in 2016 in the *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*. Specifically, researchers have found evidence that green leafy vegetables, other vegetables, berries, and seafood are neuroprotective. Studies have also found the Mediterranean diet and the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet to have protective benefits against dementia. The Mediterranean diet emphasizes vegetables, healthy fats like olive oil, and omega-3 fatty acids from fish, and the DASH diet focuses on fruits and veggies, fat-free or low-fat dairy, whole grains, and lean meats, along with cutting back on processed foods and limiting red meat. A new diet called MIND (Mediterranean–DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay) incorporates many elements of the Mediterranean diet and DASH but with modifications that reflect current evidence for brain neuroprotection, according to the article in the *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*.

**Get a good education.** People with more years of formal education are at lower risk for Alzheimer's and other dementias than those with fewer years of formal education, according to the Alzheimer's Association. Some researchers believe that having more years of education builds "cognitive reserve," which is the brain's ability to use connections between neurons (nerve cells) to enable you to continue to carry out cognitive tasks despite damaging brain changes.

**Stimulate your brain.** Having a mentally stimulating job and engaging in other mentally stimulating activities may also help build cognitive reserve, according to the Alzheimer's Association. You can also keep your mind active by learning new skills. A 2017 study published in *The American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry* suggests that acquiring skills in later life, including those related to adopting new technologies, may have the potential to reduce or delay cognitive changes associated with aging. In the study, older adults took a weekly, two-hour class in which they learned how to use a tablet computer. After the 10-week training, engagement in this new, mentally challenging activity was associated with improved processing speed.

**Socialize more.** Making new friends or spending time with the ones you have might be good for your brain. A 2018 study published in *Scientific Reports* that looked at older adults in China found that participants with consistently high or increased social engagement had a lower risk of dementia than those with consistently low social engagement. *Contributed by Everyday Health and Marie Suszynski*

# CDC Guidelines for Cleaning Households

## General recommendations for routine cleaning and disinfection of households

Community members can practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (for example: tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks, and electronics (see below for special electronics cleaning and disinfection instructions)) with household cleaners and EPA-registered disinfectants external icon that are appropriate for the surface, following label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.



- For electronics follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products. Consider use of wipeable covers for electronics. If no manufacturer guidance is available, consider the use of alcohol-based wipes or spray containing at least 70% alcohol to disinfect touch screens. Dry surfaces thoroughly to avoid pooling of liquids.

### How to clean and disinfect

#### Hard (Non-porous) Surfaces

Wear disposable gloves when cleaning and disinfecting surfaces. Gloves should be discarded after each cleaning. If reusable gloves are used, those gloves should be dedicated for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces for COVID-19 and should not be used for other purposes. Consult the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and disinfection products used. Clean hands after gloves are removed.

- If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- For disinfection, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.

For full article please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html>



## 5 Ways Your Pharmacist could help you save on your medications

### Ask the right questions

**D**o you find it increasingly difficult to pay for necessary prescription drugs? Maybe your drug copays have increased or your doctor has prescribed a pricey brand-name drug that's not covered by your plan.

There are practical ways to weave through the pharmaceutical maze so you can get the drugs you need to stay healthy — and even have a little cash left over.

It all starts with your neighborhood pharmacist. Here are five ways that the druggist can help you save money on your prescriptions:

1. Explore all your options
2. Learn about Patient Assistance Programs
3. Go Generic, When Possible
4. Get Answers to your Drug Plan Questions
5. Schedule a Medication Therapy Review

For full article please visit <https://www.everydayhealth.com/healthy-living/ways-pharmacist-can-help-save-money/>