

These 5 Things Combat Age-Related Memory Loss

The number of people who have Alzheimer's disease, along with other brain-robbing neurodegenerative diseases, is at an all-time high and these numbers are growing, a top doctor says.

"Alzheimer's disease is a runaway train barreling down on all of us. By 2050, the number of people age 65 and older with Alzheimer's disease may nearly triple, from five million to as many as 16 million," Dr. Kevin Passero, N.D., one of the nation's leading naturopathic physicians, tells Newsmax Health.

"There's no cure for Alzheimer's disease, and there's not likely to be one anytime soon. Once someone is stricken with this insidious disease, there's almost no way of stopping the downward spiral that leads to disability and, eventually death," says Passero, co-author of the new book, *Save Your Brain from Alzheimer's and Dementia*.

But there is hope because such diseases—Alzheimer's included—are not inevitable, he says. A host of lifestyle and nutritional changes you can make can help stack the odds in your favor so you can enjoy a healthy, active brain throughout your whole life, he notes.

Here are five ways to keep your brain sharp even as you age:

1. Cut out sugar. Many studies show that eating too much sugar and other carbohydrates strongly contributes to the development of insulin resistance, a condition that greatly accelerates brain aging and the onset of dementia, says Passero. "Eating a diet low in refined sugar and carbohydrates and high in fiber helps stabilize blood sugar and minimizes surges of insulin [and] could be one of the most powerful ways to keep your brain healthy," he says.

2. Lower blood pressure. Lowering your risk of cardiovascular disease also helps keep your cognitive abilities sharp, it's been found. "Endothelial dysfunction is the critical link between cardiovascular disease and cognitive decline," says Passero. Endothelial dysfunction is a condition in which the inner lining of the blood vessels does not function normally, and is often the result of damage from high blood pressure. This is why controlling blood pressure plays an important role in long-term brain health, he says.

3. Choose healthy fats. "Millions of people adhere to a low-fat, low-cholesterol diet in the name of 'heart health,' but the problem with these diets is they can lead to shortages of essential nutrients that the brain needs to manufacture memory-related neurotransmitters and functional membrane lipids," says Passero. Instead of cutting fat entirely out of your diet, choose healthy forms—including pasture-raised meat and eggs, and wild-caught fish. You can also use coconut or olive oil for cooking, and munch on healthy snacks like nuts and seeds.

4. Banish heavy metals. Toxic heavy metals are everywhere, including water, the food supply, and many household and personal care products. "While some heavy metals – including iron, manganese, copper, zinc, and chromium – are required by the body in small quantities, they act as toxins in larger amounts," says Passero. Of all these potential toxins, aluminum is the one most associated with Alzheimer's disease, so Passero advises not using aluminum foil and avoiding foods wrapped in it. Avoid dietary sources of aluminum by reading labels carefully, and avoiding ingredients with the word "aluminum" anywhere in them.

5. Reduce stress. "We place a lot of emphasis on diet, nutrition, and environmental factors when it comes to Alzheimer's prevention, but there's one major risk factor that is also the most overlooked; stress," says Passero. "Recent research shows that stress upsets the hormonal balance in a

manner that can actually accentuate the aging process.” He suggests engaging in such stress relievers as exercise, which can also boost brain health, as well as meditation, which studies have shown is a powerful stress reliever and can also boost mental focus.

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