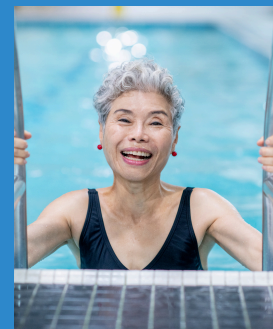




BRAIN HEALTH



**Learn about ways to reduce risk for
dementia and boost your brain health!**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview.....2

Physical Activity.....3

Protect Your Head.....5

Heart Health.....7

Hearing.....9

Blood Sugar.....11

Diet.....13

Sleep.....15

Vision.....17

Social.....19

Mind.....21

Smoking and Drinking.....23

Acknowledgements.....24

About.....25

References.....26

DISCLAIMER: THIS BOOKLET DOES NOT PROVIDE MEDICAL ADVICE. This is intended for informational purposes only. No material in this booklet is intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health care provider with any questions you may have and before undertaking a new health regimen, and never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this booklet.

OVERVIEW

Why Brain Health and Dementia Risk Reduction?

Not everyone gets dementia when they grow old. Research shows that lifestyle choices can impact our brain health. It is possible to reduce your risk for cognitive decline and dementia. This booklet provides an overview of ways to improve your brain health. Each section addresses dementia risk factors and provides tips and resources. Join us on this journey to wellness and brain health, one day at a time, one step at a time.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

About Brain Health

- **CDC Alzheimer’s Disease and Healthy Aging Program**
<https://www.cdc.gov/aging>
- **National Association of Chronic Disease Directors Healthy Aging Programs**
<https://www.chronicdisease.org/page/HealthyAging>
- **Alzheimer’s Association**
<https://www.alz.org>
- **AARP Brain Health Resource Center**
<https://www.aarp.org/health/brain-health/>
- **World Health Organization**
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/dementia>



HEALTHY BODY. HEALTHY BRAIN.

It is normal for your brain to change as you get older, however, dementia is NOT a normal part of aging. Consistent physical activity provides many health benefits, including reducing your risk for memory loss and confusion.

Physical activity can:

- Improve your ability to think and focus
- Improve your sleep quality and help you fall asleep faster
- Improve your mood and reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Lower your risk of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias

Any type of physical activity is good for your health and should be performed at your own pace to your own limits.

You should do all 3 of the following activities to ensure that you're doing all that you can for your health:



AT LEAST 150 MINUTES A WEEK

Of something that gets your heart pumping like brisk walking, swimming, or dancing.



AT LEAST 2 DAYS A WEEK

Of muscle building activities such as using exercise bands, gardening, or weight lifting.



WORK ON BALANCE

Something to improve balance like practicing transitioning from sitting to standing, doing tai chi, or yoga.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

About Physical Activity

- **Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans**
https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Physical_Activity_Guidelines_2nd_edition.pdf
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Physical Activity**
<https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity>



PROTECT YOUR HEAD. **PROTECT YOUR BRAIN.**

Falls, motor vehicle crashes, assaults, and sports injuries can all result in head injury. And a blow to your head can also be an injury to your brain.

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) can damage your brain and cause problems with your abilities to learn and think. Repeated TBIs may increase your risk for long-term memory loss and confusion.

Follow these steps to reduce your risk:

- Check your home for potential fall hazards such as loose rugs, bad lighting, and clutter.
- Always wear a helmet when riding a horse, bicycle, motorcycle, or ATV, as well as playing contact sports or skiing.
- Exercise to build muscle and improve your balance.
- Use a walker, cane, or wheelchair, if needed.

- Keep your vehicle maintained and always wear your seatbelt.
- Do not drive when you are drowsy or under the influence of alcohol, medication, or any other sleep-inducing substance.
- Get your vision checked annually and wear corrective lenses if necessary.
- Always store firearms locked and unloaded and store ammunition separate from the weapon.
- Talk with your doctor about side effects or drug interactions from your medications.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

About Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Traumatic Brain Injury and Concussion**
<https://www.cdc.gov/traumaticbraininjury/index.html>
- **Brain Injury Association of America (Hawai'i)**
<https://www.biausa.org/> or call (808) 633-8144
- **Hawai'i Neurotrauma Helpline - (808) 733-2155**
Toll Free: (833) 333-5133 TTY: (877) 447-5990



HEALTHY HEART. HEALTHY BRAIN.

What's good for your heart, is good for your brain!

Having a healthy blood pressure less than 120/80 mm HG can reduce your risk for heart disease as well as Alzheimer's Disease and related dementias. Here are some tips to help manage your blood pressure:

- Check your blood pressure at home with a blood pressure monitor.
- Stay physically active by walking, swimming, dancing, etc.
- Do not smoke or use tobacco products.
- Limit alcohol consumption to no more than 7 drinks a week.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Eat healthy meals that consist of whole, natural foods like whole grains, nuts, fish, and a variety of colorful vegetables and fruits.

- Avoid pre-packaged and ultra-processed foods because they are high in sodium, sugar and saturated fats that are bad for both your heart and your brain.
- Take your medications as prescribed by your doctor.
- Do your best to manage stress. It is important to practice self-care and make time to relax.

Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) Cholesterol is sometimes called “bad” cholesterol because it contributes to fatty buildups in arteries. When someone has high LDL cholesterol, it can increase risk for heart disease, stroke, and dementia. According to the **American Heart Association**: Talk to your doctor. If you're healthy, aim for an LDL below 100 mg/dL. If you have a history of heart attack or stroke and are already on a cholesterol-lowering medication, your doctor may aim for your LDL to be 70 mg/dL or lower.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- **Mind Your Risks**
<https://www.mindyourrisks.nih.gov>
- **High Blood Pressure**
<https://www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure>
- **Million Hearts**
<https://millionhearts.hhs.gov>
- **Hawai'i State Department of Health**
<https://livinghealthy.hawaii.gov/blood-pressure/>



HEALTHY HEARING. HEALTHY BRAIN.

It is normal for your brain to change as you get older. It is also common to have hearing loss as you get older. Untreated hearing loss can put you at risk for memory loss and confusion. If you already have hearing loss, take steps so you don't lose more. Hearing aids may be helpful because they help you understand what others are saying. This can lead to improved relationships with others. Over-the-counter hearing aids are available if you believe you have mild to moderate hearing loss.

Follow these steps to reduce your risk for hearing loss:

- Talk with your doctor annually about your hearing.
- Avoid loud environments whenever possible.
- Wear earplugs or earmuffs in noisy places.

- Lower the volume when wearing headphones or ear buds.
- Limit the length of time you are exposed to loud sounds.
- Use quieter appliances and equipment when available.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

About Hearing Loss

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention -Hearing Loss**
https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/hearing_loss/default.html
- **National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders**
<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/hearing-ear-infections-deafness>
- **Hearing Industries Association**
https://betterhearing.org/your-hearing-health/hearing_and-brain-health/
- **American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA)**
<https://www.asha.org/public/hearing/hearing-loss/>
- **U.S. Food & Drug Administration**
<https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/consumer-products/hearing-aids>
- **Global Council on Brain Health**
<https://www.aarp.org/health/brain-health/global-council-on-brain-health/hearing/>



**HEALTHY
BLOOD SUGAR.**

HEALTHY BRAIN.

Having diabetes can put your brain health at risk. Diabetes can damage blood vessels, which results in reduced or blocked blood flow to the brain. This can increase your risks for Alzheimer's disease, memory loss, and confusion.

It is important to keep your blood sugar levels under control to stay healthy. Visit your doctor regularly to help manage your diabetes.

Here are some other ways to help you manage your blood sugar and protect your brain health:



Eat healthy meals



Exercise regularly



Maintain a healthy weight



Take medications as prescribed



Monitor your blood pressure

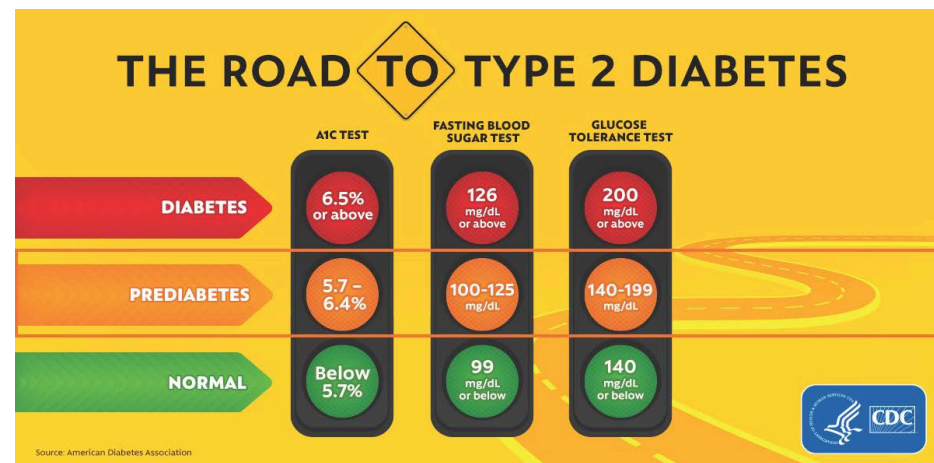


Do not use tobacco products

FOR MORE INFORMATION

About Diabetes

- **American Diabetes Association**
<https://www.diabetes.org>
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Diabetes**
<https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes>
- **National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases**
<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes>
- **Hawai'i State Department of Health**
<https://livinghealthy.hawaii.gov/beat-diabetes/>
- **Take the Diabetes Risk Test** at www.PreventDiabetesHawaii.com and share the results with your doctor or health care provider and they can verify your results utilizing a simple blood sugar (glucose) test.





HEALTHY DIET. HEALTHY BRAIN.

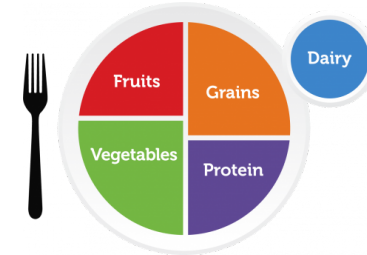
It is normal for your brain to change as you get older. A healthy diet may reduce your risk for memory loss and confusion and help improve your overall health, including brain health.

A healthy diet:

- Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products
- Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs and nuts
- Is low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium) and added sugars
- Stays within your daily calorie needs.
- Please talk to your healthcare provider about how you can have a healthy diet.

Here are a few healthy cooking tips:

- Use olive oil or avocado oil, instead of butter or other cooking oils
- Swap red meat for other proteins, such as fish, chicken, tofu, or beans
- Roast, broil, bake, grill, or air fry, instead of deep frying



FOR MORE INFORMATION

About Healthy Eating

- **Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020, 8th Edition**
<https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines>
- **ChooseMyPlate**
<https://www.choosemyplate.gov>
- **National Institute on Health**
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/alzheimers-and-dementia/what-do-we-know-about-diet-and-prevention-alzheimers-disease>

LOCAL HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS

- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program**
<https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/bessd/snap/>
- **Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program**
<https://labor.hawaii.gov/ocs/service-programs-index/federal-food-assistance-programs/sfmnp/>
- **Da Bux Double Up Food Bucks - Call 808-437-3044**
(For SNAP-EBT Cardholders) <https://dabux.org/>



HEALTHY SLEEP. HEALTHY BRAIN.

It is normal for your brain to change as you get older. Your brain works best when you get enough quality sleep and wake up feeling rested. When you don't get enough sleep or your sleep isn't restful, it can affect your attention, learning, and physical health. Over time, a lack of quality sleep may lead to memory loss and confusion. Getting enough sleep is important for good health.

Here are some tips for better sleep. Try to do as many as your work and family life allow.

- Go to bed and get up at the same time each day, including weekends.
- Keep your bedroom quiet, dark, and at a comfortable temperature.
- Sleep at least 7 hours each night.

- Avoid large meals, beverages, and alcohol before 2-3 hours before bedtime.
- Avoid caffeine after 12 p.m.
- Remove electronic devices such as TVs, computers, and smart phones from your bedroom.
- Exercise regularly.
- Talk with your doctor if you have problems sleeping after following these tips.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SLEEP

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Sleep and Sleep Disorders**
<https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/index.html>
- **National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute**
<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/education-and-awareness/sleep-health>
- **American Academy of Sleep Medicine – Sleep Education**
<https://sleepeducation.org/healthy-sleep/healthy-sleep-habits/>

FOR LOCAL RESOURCES

- **Hawaii Pacific Health Sleep Medicine**
<https://www.hawaiipacifichealth.org/sleep-medicine-department/>
- **Sleep & Insomnia Center - Hawaii Pacific Neuroscience**
(808) 261-4476
<https://hawaiineuroscience.com/sleep-and-insomnia-center/>



HEALTHY SIGHT. HEALTHY BRAIN.

Your eyes are an important part of your health. We see and experience the world through our eyes. Research is showing the connection between our vision and our brain health. Increasing evidence supports an association between untreated vision loss and dementia risk and potential modification by treatment. Cataracts and diabetic retinopathy are associated with increased dementia risks. It's important to prioritize vision health to optimize brain function.

Here are some tips for vision health:

- Get your eyes checked by a healthcare professional every year.
- If you are experiencing changes in your vision, or even if it's not as sharp as it used to be, talk with your doctor about treatment options.

- Wear protective eyewear to prevent eye injuries in the workplace or while playing sports or doing activities that could cause damage.
- Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes from the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays.
- Clean your hands and contact lenses properly.
- More tips to prevent vision loss:
 - Eat right to protect your sight.
 - Maintain a healthy weight.
 - Maintain your blood sugar levels.
 - Know your family's eye health history.
 - Quit smoking or don't start.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Vision and Eyes Health**

<https://www.cdc.gov/vision-health/prevention/index.html>

LOCAL VISION RESOURCES

- **Kalihi Palama Health Center Optometry - (808) 792-5599**
<https://www.kphc.org/patient-care/optometry/>
- **Project Vision Hawaii - (808) 201-3937**
<https://www.projectvisionhawaii.org/>
- **Med-QUEST Integration benefits may include vision services. Call 1(800) 316-8005**
- **Hawaii Pacific Health - Eye Health**
<https://www.hawaiipacifichealth.org/services/eye-health/>
- **Call your health plan to learn about vision benefits.**



HEALTHY SOCIAL LIFE. HEALTHY BRAIN.

Older adults who are more socially engaged and have stronger social networks tend to have higher cognitive function and lower risk of dementia. It is natural for our social networks to change as we age. Social isolation and loneliness have been linked with increased health risks. In the spirit of aloha, let's mālama each other and *make howzit* with our neighbors. It's good for our brain health and our community too!

Tips from the Global Council on Brain Health:

- Focus on the relationships or social activities you enjoy the most.
- Take small steps to connect with others. Share a smile a day with someone, show interest in someone by asking how they are, and practice a random act of kindness.

- Try to keep a circle of friends, family or neighbors with whom you can exchange thoughts and can encourage you. It does not need to be a large group of people.
- Add a new relationship or social activity you didn't try before. Place yourself in everyday contexts where you can meet and interact with others (e.g., stores or parks).
- Try to speak every now and then (e.g. monthly) with relatives, friends and/or neighbors; communicate in person, by phone, text or email.
- Help others, whether informally or through organizations or volunteer opportunities.
- If you have no one around who can help you engage socially, try turning to a local religious leader, telephone hotline or drop-in club for support. See below for links to social support options.

FOR LOCAL RESOURCES

Social Engagement

- **Senior Clubs, Parks and Recreation - (808) 768-6893**
<https://www.honolulu.gov/parks/program/senior-citizen-program.html>
- **Project Dana - (808) 945-3736**
<https://www.projectdana.org/socialsupport>
- **Catholic Charities Hawaii**
 - **Kokua Kupuna - (808) 527-4777**



HEALTHY MIND. HEALTHY BRAIN.

Mental well-being and cognitive stimulation are related to our brain health. We need to manage our stress, care for our mental health, and engage our minds by learning new things. These activities are vital for quality of life and may reduce risk for developing dementia.

Mental Well-Being

- Honor your feelings. Acknowledge and accept positive and negative emotions.
- Strengthen your sense of purpose in life.
- Come to peace with your past decisions and acknowledge what you cannot change.
- Spend time outdoors to regularly appreciate and enjoy nature.
- Consult a doctor or mental health professional if you think you may have anxiety or depression.

- Relieve the mental and physical effects of stress. Find outlets that work for you. For example: exercise, therapy, meditation, yoga.

Engage Your Brain



- Find new ways to stimulate your brain.
- Participate in brain stimulating activities with a friend.
- Choose an activity that you enjoy.
- Make it easy on yourself. Select activities that fit in well with your schedule and are easily accessible.
- Study something you are interested in.
- Aim for purposeful (deliberate) practice. Learn a new challenging hobby, enroll in a class, and improve performance over time.

It is never too late to benefit from cognitively stimulating activities, and you can learn new things at any age.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Mental Well-Being | Engage Your Brain

- **Hawai'i Cares - Call or text 988** to talk with a local crisis counselor 24/7 for free help in crisis, mental health, and substance use.
- **Global Council on Brain Health**
<https://www.aarp.org/health/brain-health/global-council-on-brain-health/six-pillars-interviews/>



PROTECT YOUR MIND.

NO SMOKING

Smoking is associated with an increased risk of dementia. Quitting smoking can lower the risk of cognitive decline back to levels similar to those who have not smoked. It's never too late to stop.

The Hawai'i Tobacco Quitline is a FREE confidential and convenient telephone and online service to help individuals quit tobacco and vaping. **Call or Text: 1-800-QUIT-NOW or 1-800-784-8669. Website: <https://hawaiiquitline.org>**

LIMIT ALCOHOL INTAKE

Excessive alcohol consumption is associated with an increased risk of dementia. Moderate to heavy drinkers are more likely to have cognitive decline. Avoid or limit alcohol intake. If you need substance use treatment or recovery support services, **call or text 988 for Hawaii CARES**.

Website: <https://hicares.hawaii.gov/>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to the partners who contributed to this Brain Health booklet. This content was adapted from Risk Reduction Rack Cards from the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors. Website: chronicdisease.org

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Mahalo ā nui loa!



ABOUT

Hawai'i Dementia Initiative is a coalition of community members, stakeholders, professionals, and organizations from across the state who are passionate about all things dementia, brain health, and caregiving. We are working together to move the needle on dementia and brain health in Hawai'i.

This coalition is convened by the Executive Office on Aging, Hawai'i State Department of Health. We are grateful for our valued partners who make all of this possible.

This Brain Health & Risk Reduction booklet is a draft. We would greatly appreciate your feedback on ways to improve this informational material so that we can better serve the public. Please call (808) 586-0100 if you have any questions, comments, or feedback. Mahalo!

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