

Brain Health - Care for It to Keep It

It is our wish to live a long life, to be physically fit, continue being active, be involved with pleasurable activities and to remember *“where did I put those keys?”*

We all know we should follow a healthy lifestyle, however in the last few years we have seen an addition to this health movement to include our brain. The research is consistent; our brain needs continued care to remain healthy. What is known is that the brain is designed to be stimulated, challenged and make sense of our environment. If it is not stimulated or challenged with new information it is known to deteriorate.

Consider the following:

1. **Cognitive Stimulation:** Engage in activities to stimulate your brain growth in an effort to defer additional deterioration. For example, take or teach a class, play games, learn a new language, instrument or hobby. Even using your non dominant hand for routine things like writing or eating can be helpful.
2. **Become more active about your health:** Get the recommended health screenings for your age. Avoid tobacco use in all forms. Become safety conscious about accident prevention to reduce risk of falls and potential brain injuries.
3. **Stay connected:** Become involved in meaningful activities that allow you to feel happier and healthier. For example, volunteering is a positive behavior that involves both social and mental stimulation. Build a social network that allows you to talk and interact with others.
4. **Maintain a healthy eating style:** Eating well helps your body and mind. Eat a variety of foods which include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, fish and poultry. Limit solid fats, sugar, salt and processed foods. Pay attention to portion size which is an important part of good nutrition.
5. **Sufficient sleep:** Previously we thought sleep was a period of time for our body and brain to shut down. Today from research we know differently, our body and brain are active throughout sleep and go through several stages with certain functions occurring. Keep a regular sleep schedule and bedtime routine.

A healthy lifestyle requires engaging in multiple healthy areas, including investing in brain health. Developing new habits is difficult, but can be done by picking one thing you can do that may help your brain and your mind to *remember where you put those keys!*

If you're interested in making changes to improve your brain health but you're not sure how, consider contacting the EAP at **845-638-8880** or EAP@montefiorenyack.org for confidential services. We also encourage you to view our presentation at https://youtu.be/4z_One-YOU0.