

REHAB NEWS



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ALZHEIMER'S & BRAIN AWARENESS MONTH

Every 67 seconds, someone in the United States develops Alzheimer's disease.

As defined by the Mayo Clinic, Alzheimer's is a "progressive disease that destroys memory and other mental functions. It's the most common cause of dementia – a group of brain disorders that result in the loss of intellectual and social skills". Getting into more detail... when abnormal amounts of protein deposits in the brain, plaques and tangles are formed. The plaques and tangles decrease neuron function which decreases memory and learning. Eventually, the plaques and tangles deplete neurons, resulting in death.

Although there is no definite cause for Alzheimer's, it is believed that family history/genetics, social and environmental factors all play a role in the onset of the disease. As we age, we are more likely to experience alterations in cognition. Knowing differences between age-related changes and Alzheimer's is beneficial...

Typical Age-Related Changes:

- Making a Bad Decision Once in a While
- Missing a Monthly Payment
- Forgetting Which Day it is and Recalling Later
- Sometimes Forgetting Which Word to Use
- Losing Things from Time to Time

Alzheimer's:

- Poor Judgement & Decision Making
- Inability to Manage a Budget
- Losing Track of the Date or Season
- Difficulty Having a Conversation
- Misplacing Things & Unable to Retrace Steps

Working Against Alzheimer's

Unfortunately, no cure has been found for Alzheimer's, but several studies have shown certain positive lifestyle habits improve cognitive function. These habits could delay, slow, and hopefully someday prevent the onset of this fatal disease. Here are a just few lifestyle habits that could benefit your brain!

Physical Activity

Regular exercise has shown cognitive improvement in all ages – especially older adults! During exercise (walking, biking, etc.), a molecule, Irisin, is produced in the brain. Irisin is believed to have neuroprotective effects. Meaning... Irisin helps "block" neurons from plaques and tangles that decrease neuron function.

Staying Social

As human beings, we are not made to be in isolation. Keeping an active social life will keep us happier and our memory sharper. Even if you are unable to visit friends every day, there are other options: volunteering, making a phone call, joining a new group and more!

Restful Sleep

Sleep deprivation leads to lower productivity and creativity, the inability to problem solve and recall info. By creating a regular sleep schedule, you may be able to achieve the optimal amount of sleep to increase brain function. Meditation and ambiance can help your brain and body relax... it's worth trying!

