

Eastern Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce

BLOG:

***This Is How You Can Contribute to Getting Dementia***

According to the Alzheimer's Association 5.8 million people have Alzheimer's disease, and it is the 6<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the United States. Every 65 seconds someone develops Alzheimer's disease. One in three older adults dies from Alzheimer's or other dementias. Early diagnosis can help, but only 16% of seniors receive cognitive assessments.

How do people damage their brains, and maybe not on purpose? Here is how you can contribute to having dementia:

1. Don't exercise...However, exercising 30 minutes 4-6 times per week is known to improve cardiac and respiratory function while increasing blood flow to your brain has been known to improve cognitive function. Circulating blood flow provides oxygen and nutrients to your brain.
2. Eat unhealthy foods...However, eating an anti-inflammatory diet such as leafy greens, vegetables, beans and legumes, low sugar fruits, nuts, and healthy fats is good for your brain. Minimizing eating sugar and avoid eating simple white carbohydrates such as white rice which promotes inflammation.
3. Don't stimulate your brain...However, involving yourself in learning new things such as learning a foreign language or challenging your brain with new learning keeps your cognitive functioning sharp.
4. Isolate yourself and avoid socializing...However, there is evidence ([Lancet Neurol.](#) 2004 Jun;3(6):343-53) that socializing is good for your brain health. People who connect with others generally perform better on tests of memory and other cognitive skills. And, in the long run, people with active social lives are less likely to develop dementia than those who are more socially isolated.
5. Engage in sleep depriving behavior...Sleep keeps the brain healthy by clearing out toxins that naturally build up throughout the day. Two types of cells, microglial cells and astrocytes, perform this cleaning process. During sleep, microglial cells help remove a toxic protein commonly found in the brains of Alzheimer's disease patients called beta-amyloid (BrainCheck, Jan. 18, 2018).
6. Engage in heavy consumption of alcohol and smoke tobacco products...However, moderate consumption of alcohol will not harm your brain. Smoking has been linked to respiratory problems such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease which can constrict blood flow to the brain, and chronic alcohol abuse can lead to alcohol induced dementia.
7. Live a stressful lifestyle or engage in stress inducing behaviors.... However, decreasing stress and worrying reduces the production of cortisol. Cortisol when released can contribute to inflammation.

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