



## SEPTEMBER **Healthy aging**

### Can you prevent Alzheimer's disease?

Many people fear that they might get Alzheimer's disease as they get older. It's the most common form of dementia in the U.S., affecting about one in nine seniors.

So far, we don't know how to cure it. But we have learned a few things that raise your risk, which means we might be able to do something to prevent or delay it.

Some risk factors you can't change, like age and genetics. But some can be changed. Doctors have found that high blood pressure, high blood sugar and high blood fats affect your mind. Now, researchers are looking at whether healthy habits can protect against Alzheimer's.

We can't say yet that building healthy habits will stop you from getting it. But researchers think a healthy lifestyle is a good start, because it helps control your weight, blood pressure, blood sugar and blood fats. And that might also help prevent or delay Alzheimer's disease.

Source: Wellsource/Momentum Health Shelf

### Trivia time:

*What simple activity can you do to boost your brain power?*

*Answer: Take a walk! Studies show that older women who walk two or three hours a week do better on tests of recall, learning and focus.*

### Quiz: How much do you know about healthy brain habits?

Improving or maintaining your brain health involves just about every aspect of your lifestyle. Are you doing what you can to improve your brain health? Take this quiz to find out.

#### True or False:

- Less than eight hours of sleep a day can limit your brain's ability to recall information.
- Exercise at any age improves brain activity and memory.
- Your risk for developing dementia is 80 percent higher if you are obese.
- Solving crossword puzzles and strategy games helps maintain brain function.

All of these statements are true! Your brain functions best when it is challenged regularly to form memories, store information and recall it. Proper nutrition, hydration, sleep and exercise can all help. Your lifestyle choices also can help keep your brain healthy and prevent dementia or other brain diseases.

Source: Wellsource/Momentum Health Shelf

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### 5 ways to prevent falls

People are living longer, which is great. But as we age, our sight, hearing and strength may decline. This leads to a higher risk of falls, the most common cause of injury for people older than 65. There are plenty of things you can do to stay safe, though.

1. Strengthen your bones. Get plenty of calcium and vitamin D, and ask your doctor to test your bone density.
2. Be active each day. Choose activities that improve your balance, like standing on one leg at a time and seeing how long you can maintain the pose.
3. Check your eyes. Vision deteriorates with age. Make sure you're wearing the right glasses or contacts.
4. Know how medications affect you. Some prescriptions can make you dizzy or drowsy.
5. Clear up clutter. The most common cause of falls is tripping over objects on the floor. Make sure you can walk around your home safely.

Source: Wellsource/Momentum Health Shelf

### Trivia time:

*What martial art is recommended for older adults?*

*Answer: Tai chi. Because it involves slow movements and stretching, this Chinese martial art can lower the risk of falls and broken bones.*

### It's never too late to make fitness a priority

Adults age 70 and older who are active live longer, healthier lives. Here's how to get started:

**Plan a routine.** Ask your doctor for recommendations.

**Get the right gear.** Wear comfortable shoes and loose clothing.

**Start out easy.** Be active for 10 minutes; add five more minutes each week.

**Warm up.** If you don't, you could hurt yourself.

**Build stamina.** Start where you're comfortable, then go a little longer.

**Chart your progress.** Celebrate your improvement over time.

Source: Wellsource/Momentum Health Shelf

### How flexible are you?

When you are flexible, you can bend and move without being hurt. We tend to be less flexible with age, because we don't stretch our muscles as much.

Experts recommend stretching your major muscle groups every day. If that's too often, try for three days a week.

Your goal is to be able to do normal things, like tying your shoes or reaching a high shelf, with ease. Keep at it and over time your body will adapt!

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