

**Healthy Heart,**

**Healthy Brain…**

**Keep Your Heart and Body Healthy to Protect Your Brain**

**Everyone slows down as they get older, both in body and mind. Big changes in memory or thinking that make it hard to get through the day are not a normal part of aging. These changes could be signs of early dementia or Alzheimer’s disease.**

**1 in 9**

People in the U.S. ages 65+ has Alzheimer’s dementia

**1 in 3**

American Indian people ages 65+

develops dementia

*You are more at risk of developing*

*dementia if you have:*

* ***high blood pressure***
* ***diabetes*** *or*
* ***you smoke cigarettes***

**You can protect your body, heart, and mind**

* **Schedule a** “wellness” visit and health screenings every year with your doctor, even if you feel ok
* **Keep a healthy blood pressure**
* **Be active or walk** every day
* **Maintain a healthy weight** for your body size
* **Eat a healthier diet** with more fresh vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and fish
* **Stop smoking** cigarettes or chewing tobacco
* **Get help managing** your high blood pressure, diabetes, or to lose extra weight
* **Talk to your doctor about how you feel** because your mental health can affect your brain and physical health

## **If it is hard for you to get through the day** because of forgetfulness or memory problems, see your doctor right away

**You can do these things today to protect your mind and reduce the risk of or slow down dementia.**

***Turn over for your checklist to keep your river of life flowing freely*0**

**The River of Life Flows Through Your Heart to Protect Your Mind and Body**

**Your heart health plays a big part in the health of your brain. Your heart is like the start of a flowing river. Blood vessels that take blood to and from your heart are like connected streams that flow through your body. They feed your brain with oxygen and energy.**

**You can do things to keep the streams freely flowing through your body, so your heart and brain stay strong and healthy.**

**Working with Your Doctor**

* + **Make an appointment** for a “wellness” checkup with your doctor every year
    - You will get tests and screenings to make sure you are healthy
    - They are usually free with Medicare Part B or the Indian Health Service
    - If you have concerns about your memory, talk to your doctor
* **Have your blood pressure checked** and know your numbers
  + - Your blood pressure should be less than 120/80 mmHg (120 over 80)
    - If you do not know how to take your blood pressure, ask your doctor to show you
* **Have your weight checked** regularly and know your number. If you need to lose extra weight, ask your doctor about:
  + - The right number of calories for your body
    - Ideas for healthier food choices
    - Support for losing weight
* **If you smoke cigarettes or chew tobacco**, ask about medicine, counseling, or help to stop
* **If you do not have diabetes,** have your blood sugar level checked during your visit. Your blood sugar should be less than 100 mg/dL when you have not eaten.
* **If you do have diabetes,** go to regular doctor visits. Have your blood sugar and “A1C” levels checked. Your doctor will tell you what your A1C level should be.
* **Talk with your doctor** about all the medicines and vitamins you take. Your doctor can make sure they do not cause any problems with your memory, sleep, or brain function.

**Other Steps You Can Take**

* + **Aim for** 20 minutes of **physical activity** a day or 2 1/2 hours a week
* **Eat less** salt, sugar, red meat, and highly processed or packaged foods
* **Read food labels** to see how much salt (sodium) or fat is in your food
* **Manage extra weight** by making small changes. Losing a few pounds makes a difference
* **Limit alcohol.** No more than 1 drink per day for women and 2 for men
* **Take your medicine** for blood pressure, diabetes, and other problems even if you feel good
* **Get at least seven hours of sleep** each night. Talk to your doctor if you have trouble sleeping
* **Keep your mind active.** Visit with people in your community, help plan tribal events, go to your senior center, teach your language, play cards, or start a new hobby.

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