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HAPPY NEW YEAR



New Year's Resolutions

What if our resolutions could improve brain health and reduce the risk of cognitive decline? Wouldn't we all want to accept the challenge?

1. **Exercise your brain**— As the saying goes, “Use it or lose it!” Keeping your brain stimulated can improve cognitive skills and reduce or risk of dementia.
2. **Keep moving**— Physical activity is associated with a lower risk of cognitive decline. Engage in exercises that will elevate your heart rate and increase the blood flow to your brain. Consider walking, biking and gardening. Most importantly participate in activities that you enjoy. Always consult your doctor before starting any new exercise program.
3. **Eat a ‘smart’ diet**— Opt for a balanced diet, such as the Mediterranean diet, which is rich in vegetables, fruits, legumes, whole grains and fish, and uses olive oil as the primary cooking fat.
4. **Socialize and stay wise**- Studies on the brain health show that regular social interaction helps to maintain brain function and reduces the risk of depression and dementia. During this time of Covid-9 it is especially important to stay connected to family and friends. Schedule regular phone calls. If possible make use of I pads, computers and phones to have 'Face to Face' visits. Return to the tried and true method of sending cards and letters in the mail. The benefits are great for both the giver and receiver.
5. **Take care of our health**—Getting enough exercise,

eating a healthy diet, socializing and stimulating your brain are good starting points for maintaining brain health and reducing the risk of dementia. However, there are other health measures that can also help. For example: stop smoking, limit your alcohol intake; get 7 to 9 hours of sleep every night; and monitor your blood pressure. Also, talk to your doctor if you are concerned about any symptoms that might indicate the possibility of dementia.

By following these expert tips and incorporating them into your regular routine, you can keep your brain healthy and reduce your risk of cognitive decline and dementia. And the best news of all? It's never too late to get started! **HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

(Adapted from article by Crystal Yost, PCHA, PCH)

