

# Brain Health As You Age: You Can Make a Difference!



We all want to stay healthy and independent as we get older. Along with keeping our bodies in good shape, we want to keep our minds healthy, too.

Developing a brain disease or injury as you age depends on a mix of your family's genes, your environment, and your health choices.

Diseases and conditions that affect brain health include:

- Genetic makeup
- Certain medicines, smoking and excessive alcohol
- Health problems like diabetes and heart disease
- Diseases like depression and Alzheimer's
- Brain injury
- Poor diet, insufficient sleep, lack of physical and social activity

Some risks to brain health cannot be controlled or prevented, like your genes. Others, like health choices, are under your control. For example, you can:

- Take care of your health
- Eat a healthy diet
- Drink alcohol moderately, if at all
- Get active and stay active
- Sleep 7-8 hours each night
- Learn new things
- Connect with your family, friends, and communities

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Your doctor or health care provider can provide information to you about taking care of your health, and there are a number of resources on the Internet and at libraries on healthy choices in diet, exercise, and social activities.

## Resources

For more information on local programs and resources about health and aging, you can contact your local Area Agency on Aging (AAA) by calling 1-800-677-1116 or visiting the Website <http://www.eldercare.gov>.

You can also check out the following user-friendly resources:

<http://www.nih.gov>

The Website of the National Institutes of Health has information on prevention and treatment for many conditions and disorders related to brain health. It's National Institute on Aging focuses on a variety of age-related health conditions and ways to lead a healthier life as you grow older, at <http://www.nia.nih.gov>. To find out about participating in research studies, visit <http://www.clinicaltrials.gov>.

<http://www.cdc.gov/aging/aginginfo/index.htm>

This Website from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has links to a wide variety of healthy aging topics of interest to older adults.