

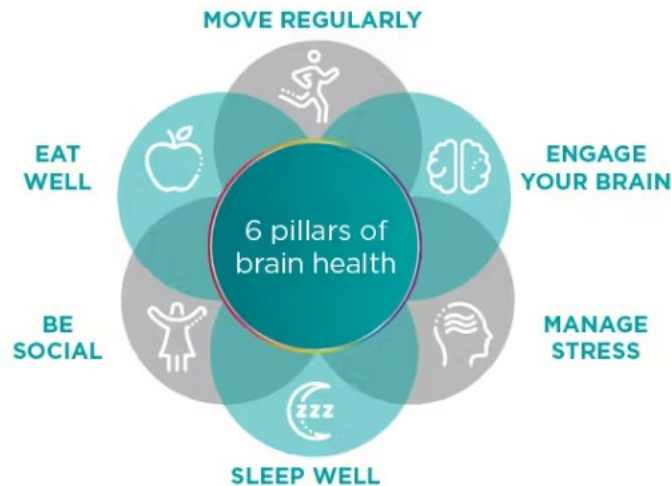
# Avenue II **Safety & Health Week** Newsletter

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**Together** we can create **safe workplaces** and **communities**

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## POINTERS FOR POSITIVE BRAIN HEALTH



When you lead a brain-healthy lifestyle, your brain will stay working stronger and longer. Here is how you can do it by following the 6 pillars of brain health!

### 1. **Move Regularly**

When it comes to physical activity, what's good for your body is also good for your brain. Regular physical activity is one of the most consistently proven ways to support cognitive function. Even short bursts, such as 10 minutes of daily movement, can improve focus and problem-solving. Any form of physical activity can do the job. Aim for 150 minutes of physical activity a week. Take a walk through your neighborhood or hop on a bike and pedal around town, for instance. Even something like dancing can improve your brain's function. Regular exercise can reduce stress, boost your mood, improve your memory, and increase your energy.

### 2. **Engage your Brain**

Those who continue to learn new things throughout life and challenge their brains are less likely to develop Alzheimer's disease and dementia, so make it a point to stimulate your brain. Daily crossword puzzles or other knowledge-based games can certainly help keep your grey matter strong. Try new activities to challenge your brain, cook a new dish, learn to play a musical instrument, sign up for a class. Complex, novel activities are more beneficial than repetitive ones.

### 3. **Manage Stress**

Stress that is chronic or severe takes a heavy toll on the brain, leading to shrinkage in a key memory area of the brain leading to Alzheimer's disease and dementia. Get yourself in check with these proven techniques.

- Breathe! Stress alters your breathing rate and impacts oxygen levels to the brain. Quiet your stress response with deep, abdominal breathing.
- Schedule daily relaxation activities. Keeping stress under control requires regular effort. Make relaxation a priority, whether it's a walk in the park, playtime with a pet, yoga, or a soothing bath
- Nourish your inner peace by participating in meditation, prayer, reflection, religious practice

#### **4. Sleep Well**

Your brain doesn't shut down while you sleep. In fact, in some ways it's busier than during the day. The "maintenance" that comes with sleep can help your brain fend off dementia and age-related decline. Most adults need seven to nine hours of sleep per night to be at their best physically and mentally. Research shows that consistently sleeping for fewer than five hours a night doubles your risk of dementia. Difficulty falling asleep when your head hits the pillow also elevates your risk. Quality sleep is essential for clearing waste proteins from the brain and consolidating memory. A cool, dark, and quiet bedroom environment helps ensure your brain performs necessary maintenance.

#### **5. Be Social**

Humans are social creatures; we don't thrive in isolation. Often, we tend to isolate ourselves as we get older but there are many ways to keep connected.

- Volunteer
- Join a club
- Visit your local senior centre
- Take a class
- Reach out to friends and family over the phone or email
- Connect to others via social networking such as Facebook
- Get to know your neighbours
- Make a weekly date with friends
- Get out of the house - go to the movies, the park, or a museum

Social ties also boost positive feelings and help reduce stress.

#### **6. Eat Well**

Food is fuel for your mind, and better fuel brings better results.

Filling your belly with fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean meats (like fish) can improve mental performance and protect against decline. Research shows that following the MIND diet can reduce your risk of developing Alzheimer's disease and dementia. The MIND diet blends aspects of the Mediterranean diet and DASH diet, which also guard against those conditions.

For more information on Brain Health, go to:

<https://womensbrainhealth.org/think-tank/do-you-know-your-six-pillars-of-brain-health>

<https://www.stjohns.health/documents/content/pillars-of-brain-health-1.pdf>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/seeds-of-wisdom/202603/the-6-pillars-of-brain-health>

<https://www.adventhealth.com/adventhealth-whole-health-institute/blogs/six-pillars-brain-health>

<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/brain-health>