

WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOUR HEART IS ALSO GOOD FOR YOUR BRAIN



Learn which healthy habits are important for your brain and heart.

Keeping your blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar and your weight in a healthy range are all good for your heart. Following these heart-healthy habits can lower your chances of having a stroke, heart disease or heart attack. But did you know that these are beneficial for brain health too, and may help to reduce your risk of dementia.

So what is good for your heart is also good for your brain.



Here's what happens

The reason why heart-healthy habits are good for your brain is partly because both the heart and the brain rely on healthy blood vessels to supply them with oxygen and nutrients.

Put simply, the brain needs a healthy heart and healthy blood vessels to provide a good blood supply to keep brain cells functioning well.

And if your heart isn't pumping well — or if your brain's blood vessels are damaged — your brain doesn't get the blood flow it needs, and your brain cells have trouble getting all the food and oxygen they need.

Like heart disease, it often takes years of unhealthy habits to damage your brain, so it's important to think about healthy habits early and maintain them through adulthood and middle age. But it is never too late to make brain healthy changes!

**TAKE ON ALZHEIMER'S
CHALLENGE AUSTRALIA**



HEALTHY BRAIN AND HEALTHY HEART

There are small steps that you can take in your everyday life that will make a real difference to your brain health and the health of your heart, and reduce your risk of dementia and heart disease.

Keep your blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar and body weight at healthy levels

- Have regular health checks and follow the advice of your health professional. Your doctor may prescribe medications. Make sure you make sure you follow their advice.

Don't smoke

The toxins of tobacco smoke can harm nearly every organ and system of the body, including the heart and brain.

- To get help to quit smoking, call **Quitline** on **131 848** or visit **quitnow.info.au**

Be physically active

Regular moderate-intensity physical activity is good for your heart and brain.

- Doing any physical activity is better than doing none
- Gradually increase the amount you do and build up to at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity a day.

Follow a healthy diet

The food you eat (and the amount you eat) can affect cholesterol, blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and your weight.

- Foods that are good for brain health and heart health include plenty of vegetables, some fruits, legumes, wholegrain cereals, fish and lean cuts of meat. Limit the amount saturated and trans fats in your diet, by choosing low-fat dairy, limiting take away and processed foods such as pies, pastries and cakes.
- Limit your alcohol intake to no more than two standard drinks in any one day.

Participate in social activities

- Catch up regularly with family and friends, join a club or group, or volunteer.

Manage depression

- Depression may be associated with a higher risk of developing heart disease and dementia. Depression is treatable, so if you think you have depression, talking to your doctor is the best first step.

WANT MORE INFORMATION?



Your Brain Matters is Alzheimer's Australia's brain health program. Visit **yourbrainmatters.org.au** to learn about dementia and what you can do to maximise your brain health.



National Dementia Helpline **1800 100 500**



The **Heart Foundation** is working towards creating healthy environments that encourage and support more people to walk.

For more information on Heart Foundation Walking visit **walking.heartfoundation.org.au**



Heart Foundation, Health Information Service
1300 362 787