

Brain Health Self-Management Plan

Promote a healthy brain! Diet, nutrition, physical health, mental health and social well-being are all key lifestyle factors in promoting a healthy brain.

- Switch from saturated and trans fats to olive oil and fatty fish, such as salmon or ocean trout.
- Get a good night's sleep.
- If you smoke, consider quitting.
- Avoid drinking alcohol.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- If you have diabetes, keep your blood sugar under control.
- Consider learning new information and skills.

Green Flags – All Clear



If you:

- Follow a healthy diet
- Get at least 30 minutes of daily exercise
- Have mental stimulation, like reading, crossword, puzzles, or do memory exercises
- Stay socially active with friends and family

What this means ...

- Good work!
- You are taking steps towards your brain health

Keep up the good work!

Yellow Flags – Caution



If you have:

- Are not following a healthy diet or getting regular exercise
- Do not get regular sleep, or your sleep is often interrupted
- Drink alcohol in excess
- Smoke cigarettes or chew tobacco
- Have diabetes and your blood sugar is not well controlled
- Forget important events, difficulty concentrating, forgetting familiar locations, misplace things, have difficult time with making decisions, or have changes in mood or personality.

What this means ...

- You are at higher risk for brain related changes, including problems with memory, mood, and behavior
- Higher blood sugar affects brain health.
- You are at higher risk for cancer
- You may have memory loss that needs to be evaluated by your health care provider.

Call your doctor, consulting nurse, or health care provider if symptoms do not improve.

Name:

Number:

Instructions:

If you notice a Yellow Flag, work closely with your health care team.

Red Flags – Stop and Think



If you or a loved one have:

- Trouble thinking clearly
- Facial drooping or numbness
- Arm weakness
- Speech difficulty, slurring
- Sudden trouble seeing (one or both eyes)
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance, or coordination
- Sudden onset of severe headache with no known cause
- Unresponsiveness
- Seizures

What this means ...

- A possible stroke. You need to be evaluated by a health care professional immediately.

If possible, notify your health care provider's office.

Name:

Number:

Follow these instructions: CALL 9-1-1

If you notice a Red Flag, CALL 911. Emergency!

Brain Health Facts

- Every time your heart beats, your arteries carry 20 percent to 25 percent of your blood to the brain.
- Your brain uses 20 percent of the total oxygen in your body.
- There are 100,000 miles of blood vessels in the brain. High blood pressure weakens the blood vessels over time, leading to a stroke or aneurysm.
- Every time you recall a memory or have a new thought, you create a connection in the brain.
- Size doesn't matter in the brain. There is no evidence that a larger brain is smarter than a smaller brain.
- Excessive stress has shown to alter brain functioning.

What can you do?

- Keep your blood pressure under control.
- Consider mind-challenging activities, like puzzles, memory games. (According to a study published in The New England Journal of Medicine, adults who participate in mind-challenging activities were 63 percent less likely to develop dementia)
- Get regular exercise, since it's important for a healthy body and a healthy brain. Exercise promotes effective blood circulation to the brain.
- Get plenty of sleep. A minimum of seven hours of uninterrupted sleep is best. Avoid watching TV or working on the computer before bedtime.
- Consider decreasing the amount of caffeine you take in daily, particularly if you consume a lot of caffeine through coffee and cola beverages. Caffeine can make a person feel restless and leads to anxiety and insomnia.
- Manage your stress. Consider meditation or other methods to calm down and relax.
- Drink plenty of water, unless otherwise directed by your medical provider.
- Eliminate bad habits—drinking, smoking, inactivity, poor diet, worry, anger are not helpful in promoting brain health.
- Whether you are working or are in retirement, it's important to maintain a sense of purpose. Whether you have a hobby, volunteer, read or write stories, or have some other task you are involved with, it's important to find something that is worthwhile to do.

Aging and Disability Services

Aging and Disability Services (ADS)—the Area Agency on Aging for King County— plans, coordinates, and advocates for comprehensive services for older adults, family caregivers, and people with disabilities throughout Seattle and King County.

For more information, call 1-844-348-5464 or e-mail info@communitylivingconnections.org



Aging and Disability Services
700 Fifth Avenue, 51st Floor • PO Box 34215
Seattle, WA 98124-4215
Tel: 206-684-0660 • TTY: 206-684-0702
aginginfo@seattle.gov

www.agingkingcounty.org