

# 10 Things

## Every Woman Should Do To Take Care of Her Brain

Every 65 seconds a new brain develops Alzheimer's disease. Two out of three Alzheimer's brains belong to women and we don't know why. The risk is even higher for women of color.

Women's brains are different from men's and have unique needs. In fact, up to a third of Alzheimer's cases may be preventable through lifestyle changes. Here are 10 simple things that every woman can do to reduce the risk of dementia and Alzheimer's.



### 1.

**Change your diet.** What we eat affects our brains, hormone levels and menopause symptoms. A diet rich in fatty fish, fruits, vegetables and nuts can help reduce inflammation, improve brain health and potentially help prevent dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

### 2.

**Take a walk.** Women are less likely than men to exercise regularly. But moderate daily aerobic exercise can delay or reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease. Exercise also creates physical changes to our brains that can help protect against dementia.

3.

**Get enough sleep.** Women may have more trouble sleeping than men especially during and after menopause. Sleep is vital because that is when our brains remove toxins and proteins that could lead to Alzheimer's. Our brain needs at least seven to eight hours to go through its cleansing cycles.

4.

**Take care of your heart.** Heart disease, the number one cause of death in women, is a risk factor for cognitive decline. A healthy diet, managing stress levels and keeping a healthy weight can protect both our hearts and our brains.

5.

**Exercise your mind.** Keeping our brains active may help reduce our risk of dementia. The key is to challenge your brain: Read a new book, learn to play an instrument or a new game – anything that stimulates your brain can help build an ability to ward off cognitive decline.

6.

**Increase your antioxidants.** Foods rich in vitamins A, C and E may help reduce oxidative stress in women's brains, which are vulnerable to inflammation and stress. These powerful vitamins can also help alleviate symptoms of menopause.

7.

**Keep stress in check.** Stress raises cortisol levels, which can lead to brain shrinkage and memory impairment, especially after menopause. So: Meditate, sleep, exercise and engage in social interaction. Women are more likely than men to be affected by loneliness and lack of support.

8.

**Take care of your gut.** The brain and gastrointestinal system are connected. You can nurture healthy gut microbes by keeping insulin levels in check and by eating less sugar, fewer processed foods, and more fiber and fermented foods.

9.

**Ask about hormones.** Perimenopause and menopause may occur over several years, often beginning in the late 40s, and can lead to hormonal imbalances. These changes can lead to brain fog, memory lapses, difficulty sleeping and other troubling effects. Talk to a doctor about treatments to alleviate your symptoms.

10.

**Be mindful about your mood.** Women are twice as likely as men to have anxiety and depression, and many develop depression during menopause. This could affect memory and result in an increased risk for Alzheimer's. If you are depressed, talk to a doctor right away. Many treatment options are available.



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