



Supporting **Brain Health** in Our Community

Building **Healthy Brain** Habits





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**Leading Public Policy in North Carolina
supporting a team of Government Relations
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Tennessee, and South Carolina**

What will we discuss today?

Alzheimer's and dementia research has made incredible progress in understanding the disease and how to protect your brain.

Today's Goal: Learn about modifiable risk factors & activities you can integrate into your daily lives to improve your brain health habits.

About the Alzheimer's Association

The Alzheimer's Association leads the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia — by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support.

Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's and all other dementia[®].



Cognitive Decline

Cognitive decline refers to changes in memory, thinking, and/or reasoning that are worsening over time.



Dementia

An umbrella term for loss of memory and other thinking abilities **severe enough to interfere with daily life**. Dementia is NOT a normal part of aging.

Alzheimer's

Vascular

Lewy body

Frontotemporal

Other, including Huntington's

Mixed dementia: from more than one cause

2026 ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE FACTS AND FIGURES



1 in 3 older adults
dies with Alzheimer's
or another dementia

Between 2000 and
2024 deaths from heart
disease have decreased **3.8%**



while deaths from
Alzheimer's disease
have increased over **134%**



It kills more than
breast cancer and
prostate cancer



COMBINED

In 2026, Alzheimer's
and other dementias
will cost the nation

**\$409
BILLION**

By 2050,
these costs
could rise to nearly

\$1 TRILLION



The lifetime
risk for
Alzheimer's
at age 45 is

1 in 5
for women

1 in 10
for men

OVER
7 MILLION

Americans
are living
with
Alzheimer's



NEARLY
13 MILLION

Americans provide
unpaid care for people
with Alzheimer's or
other dementias



These caregivers
provided more
than 19 billion
hours valued over
\$446 BILLION



3 out of 4
Americans say
lifestyle behaviors
are important
for brain health,



but only
46%
strongly connect
these behaviors to
reducing dementia risk



2026

ALZHEIMER'S STATISTICS NORTH CAROLINA



PREVALENCE

210,500

of People Aged 65 and Older with Alzheimer's (2020)

11.6%

% of Adults Over 65 with Alzheimer's

of Geriatricians in 2021

253

Increase Needed to Meet 2050 Demand

61.3%

of Home Health and Personal Care Aides in 2022

62,750

Increase Needed to Meet 2032 Demand

23.3%

WORKFORCE

More than **7 million Americans** are living with Alzheimer's, and more than **12 million** provide their unpaid care. The cost of caring for

REGIVING

338,000

of Caregivers

446M

Total Hours of Unpaid Care

\$8.3B

Total Value of Unpaid Care

50.7%

27.0%

17.0%

increasing to nearly
\$1 trillion (in today's
dollars) by mid-century.

For more information,
view the 2026
*Alzheimer's Disease
Facts and Figures*
report at
alz.org/facts.

of People in Hospice
(2017) with a Primary
Diagnosis of Dementia

8,486

Hospice Residents with
a Primary Diagnosis
of Dementia

17.0%

of Emergency Department
Visits per 1,000 People with
Dementia (2018)

1,684

Dementia Patient
Hospital Readmission
Rate (2018)

21.5%

Medicaid Costs of
Caring for People with
Alzheimer's (2025)

\$1.84B

Per Capita Medicare
Spending on People with
Dementia in 2025 Dollars

\$30,020

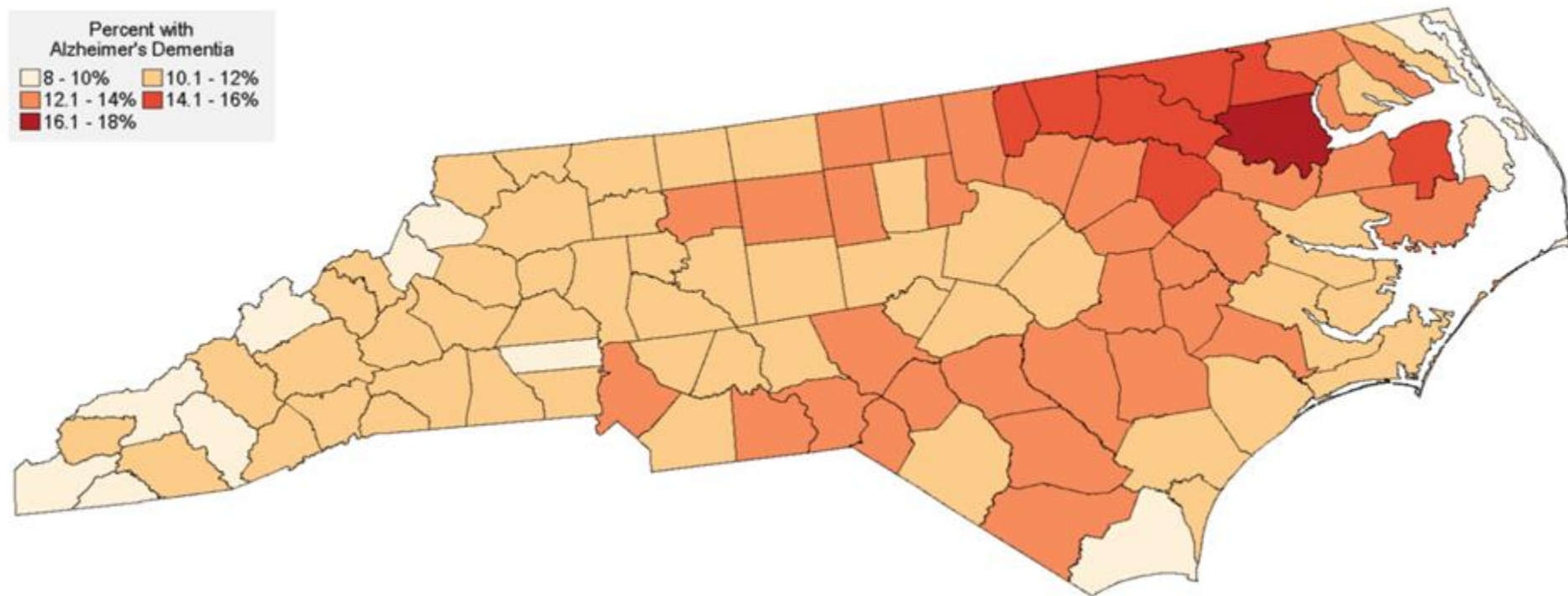
HEALTH CARE

MORTALITY

4,031 # of Deaths from
Alzheimer's Disease (2024)
6th leading cause of death



County-level prevalence data





We all deserve a life with the
healthiest brain possible.

We can all take actions to help
protect our brain health.



Risks to Brain Health

In most cases, Alzheimer's is the result of complex interactions across multiple factors.

Non-modifiable

Ones we cannot change

- » Age
- » Genetics
- » Family history

Modifiable

Ones we can change!

- » Certain health conditions
- » Health behaviors

Take Charge of Your Brain Health



There are several risk factors for cognitive decline and dementia. Some, such as age, we can't control. But there are **actions we can take to improve our brain health.**



Growing evidence shows that **healthy living can lower the risk of cognitive decline and possibly dementia.**



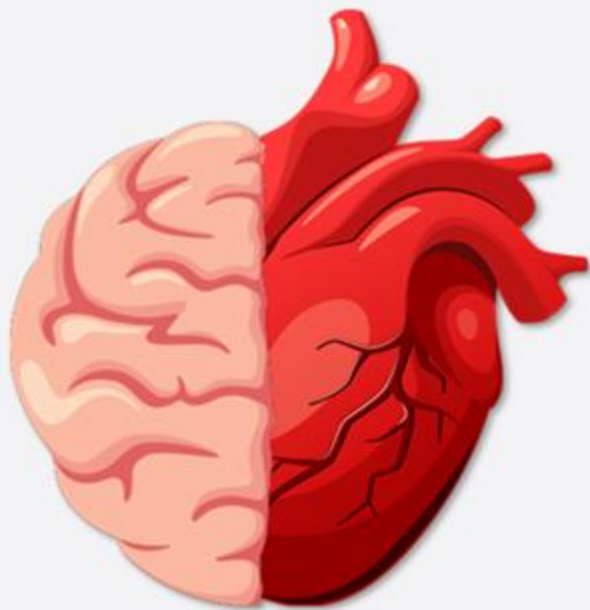
Our brains need to be taken care of at all ages. It is never **too early or too late** to take action to protect brain health.

The brain-heart connection



Our hearts and brains are closely connected.

- The heart pumps blood to the brain.
- The blood provides oxygen and other nutrients to nourish the brain.
- **What's good for our hearts is good for our brains.**



10 HEALTHY HABITS FOR YOUR BRAIN



Protect your
head



Be smoke-
free



Get moving



Challenge
your mind



Control your
blood pressure



Manage
diabetes



Sleep well



Stay in
school



Eat right



Maintain a
healthy weight

Why these

10 HEALTHY HABITS FOR YOUR BRAIN

?

Currently, these risk factors have the strongest levels of evidence.

There may be other risks to brain health but the current body of science is lower or unclear. Exciting research is exploring many topics, including hearing and vision loss, stress, air pollution.

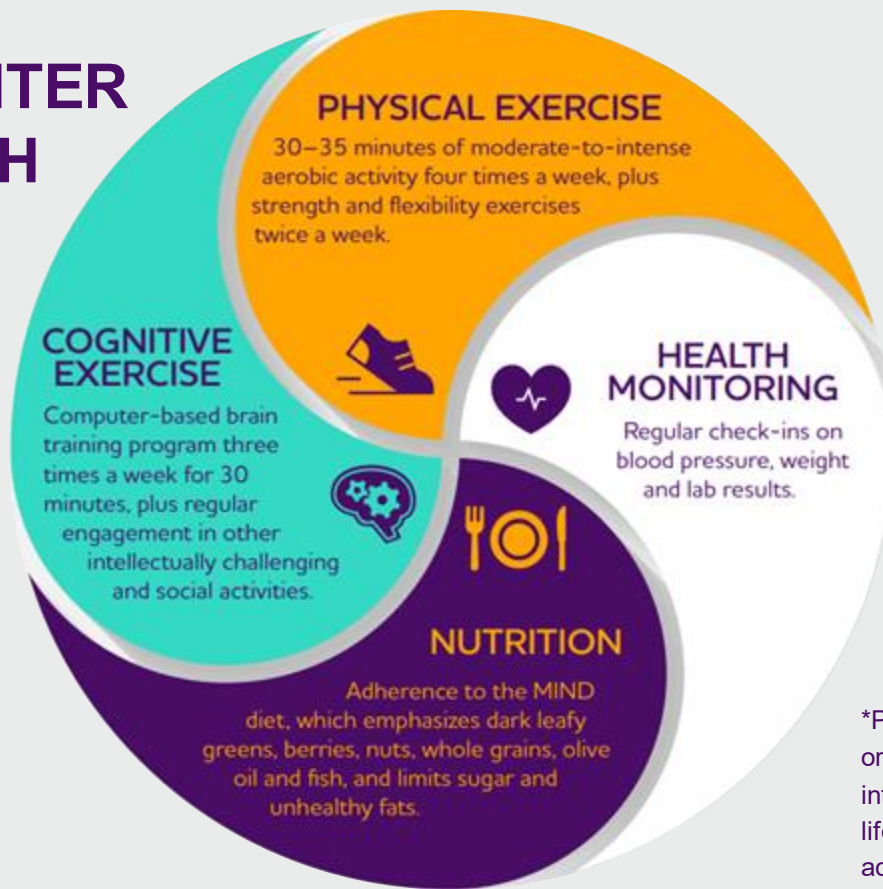
Learn more alz.org/healthyhabits



U.S. POINTER ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

The first large-scale, randomized controlled trial in the U.S. to evaluate whether addressing several lifestyle factors at the same time – diet, exercise, cognitive stimulation, and heart health – can protect cognitive function in older adults at increased risk for cognitive decline.

THE U.S. POINTER BRAIN HEALTH RECIPE*



*Participants followed either a self-guided or structured lifestyle program. The two interventions both focused on the same lifestyle domains, but differed in structure, accountability and support provided.

Get moving



Aerobics, strength training and stretching are all part of a balanced exercise routine.

Aim for:



Aerobic exercise:

30-35 minutes of moderate-to-intense aerobic activity four times a week



Strength training:

15-20 minutes, two times a week



Stretching and balance exercises:

10-15 minutes, two times a week

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What's good for the heart is good for the brain

Control Your Blood Pressure



Blood pressure should be less than 130/80 mmHG.

Manage Diabetes



Healthy eating, exercise and medications can be effective in managing diabetes.

Maintain a Healthy Weight



Talk with a health care provider about what is right for you.

Be Smoke-Free



Quitting can be hard! 1-800-QUIT-NOW or local resources can help.

Eat right



Eat Right

**The MIND diet
provides optimal
nutrition for brain
health.**



Aim to regularly eat:

- Leafy Green Vegetables, 1 serving/day
- Other Vegetables, 1 serving/day
- Berries, 5 servings/week
- Whole Grains, 3 servings/day
- Poultry (white meat, skinless), 2 servings/week
- Fish (not fried), 1 serving/week
- Beans/Legumes, 3 servings/week
- Nuts, 5 servings/week
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil, 2 servings/day



Limit:

- Red & Processed Meats
- Butter/Margarine
- Cheese
- Fried Foods
- Sweets

alz.org/foodtracker

Tips to eat right



Eat Right

Focus on adding more healthy foods. What can you add?



- Healthy afternoon snacks
- Vegetables on pasta or rice
- Fruit along with dessert

Find healthier foods you can swap in. What new foods are you willing to try?



- Olive oil
- Herbs
- Leaner meats
- Whole grains

Sleep well



Sleep Well

Quality sleep allows you to go through the sleep cycle, including deep sleep, and this is valuable for brain health.



Adults should aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep.

Tips to sleep well



Sleep Well



Avoid caffeine
later in the day.



Be physically
active during
the day.



Minimize naps.



Keep a
regular sleep
schedule.



Cooler
temperatures
promote sleep.



Minimize
noise.



Block light with
black out
curtains or
masks.



Protect your
sleep from
disruptions.

Keep your brain working hard



Cognitive engagement builds new connections in our brains.



- Learning builds up a “cognitive reserve”.
- The more years of formal education, the better.
- Cognitive engagement encourages bloodflow to the brain and more connections between brain cells.

Tips to challenge your mind



Challenge Your
Mind



Try strategy
games



Do
puzzles



Learn a
language



Explore a new
hobby

Get out of your comfort zone and make your brain work hard.

Prevent head injuries



Head injuries, including concussions, can cause short- and long-term problems.



Make sure everyone in your vehicle is wearing a seatbelt.



Wear a helmet to minimize injuries while bike riding, skating, skiing, or similar activities.



Organize your space to minimize the risk of falling. Keep safety in mind for home projects.

Other factors being studied



Hearing and vision loss:

To date, some studies suggest that **hearing and/or vision loss may be associated with higher risk of dementia.**



Air pollution:

Some studies show a **link between particulate matter** in the air and **possible increased risk of cognitive decline.**



Alcohol abuse:

Excessive use of alcohol over time can lead to memory issues and possibly even to Korsakoff syndrome – a chronic memory disorder.



Stress:

Short-term stress may affect our daily routines and brain-healthy habits. So, **managing stress could be important for brain health.**

Brain Health Habit Builder



Your brain health affects how you live now and can protect your memory and thinking for the future.

Use this tool to check your current brain-healthy habits. Then use the results to create an action plan to take charge of your brain health.

Get Started



My ALZ Journey

ALZHEIMER'S  ASSOCIATION

**Support, guidance
and connection for
newly diagnosed
people and care
partners –
all in one app**



Free mobile app for newly diagnosed individuals and care partners



Provides personalized guidance, trusted resources and local connections



Helps users understand their diagnosis, stay independent and plan for the future



Connects users to their local Alzheimer's Association chapter for programs and support



Built with input from people living with dementia and care partners



Join us to take action for brain health

- ✓ ☐ Spread the word! Tell others about these brain-healthy habits.
- ✓ ☐ Get involved in clinical trials or a research study. Some studies focus on prevention.
- ✓ ☐ Fight Alzheimer's through a fundraising activity of your choice on a day that works for you.
- ✓ ☐ Visit alz.org or call our helpline to learn more.





24/7 Helpline



The Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline (800.272.3900) is a free service offering confidential information and support for people living with dementia, caregivers, families and the public.



Free Education and Support

The Association offers robust information, education and support both in person and online, and helps to connect individuals with resources in the community.

TrialMatch®

The Association connects individuals living with cognitive impairment, Alzheimer's disease or another dementia, caregivers and healthy participants with current research studies. This free, easy-to-use service helps you find clinical research that may be a good fit.



QUESTIONS?

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