

# Your Hearing Care Is Health Care NEWSLETTER



A Health Care Publication from Dr. Judy Olson, AuD

April 2025



## ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH

### Is there a connection between alcohol and hearing loss?

**A**lcohol Awareness Month was organized by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence. It has become a national movement to help draw attention to the causes and effects of alcoholism. We honor this month with the hopes that, as audiologists, we can also bring awareness to the correlation between alcohol and hearing loss.

#### How does alcohol affect your hearing?

Do you like to have a few beers or a glass of wine every now and then? Fear not, we aren't here to lecture you. In fact, moderate or social drinking typically won't affect your hearing at all. But there are some takeaways to consider relative to what level of consumption is safe.

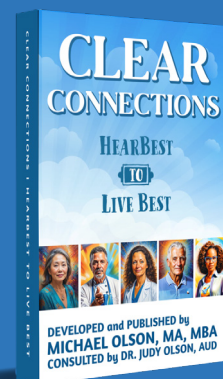
#### So, does drinking alcohol cause hearing loss?

That's a complex question, but we do now know that it does have effects on the brain and can impact hearing. A person who drinks alcohol regularly for long periods can expect that the part of the brain which processes auditory signals (central auditory cortex) will more than likely be effected. Research has shown that heavy drinking does, in fact, correlate with poor hearing. For more information, visit <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/15084909/>.

#### The effects of alcohol on the auditory cortex.

The central auditory cortex is responsible for interpreting sound signals. Once our outer ear collects these

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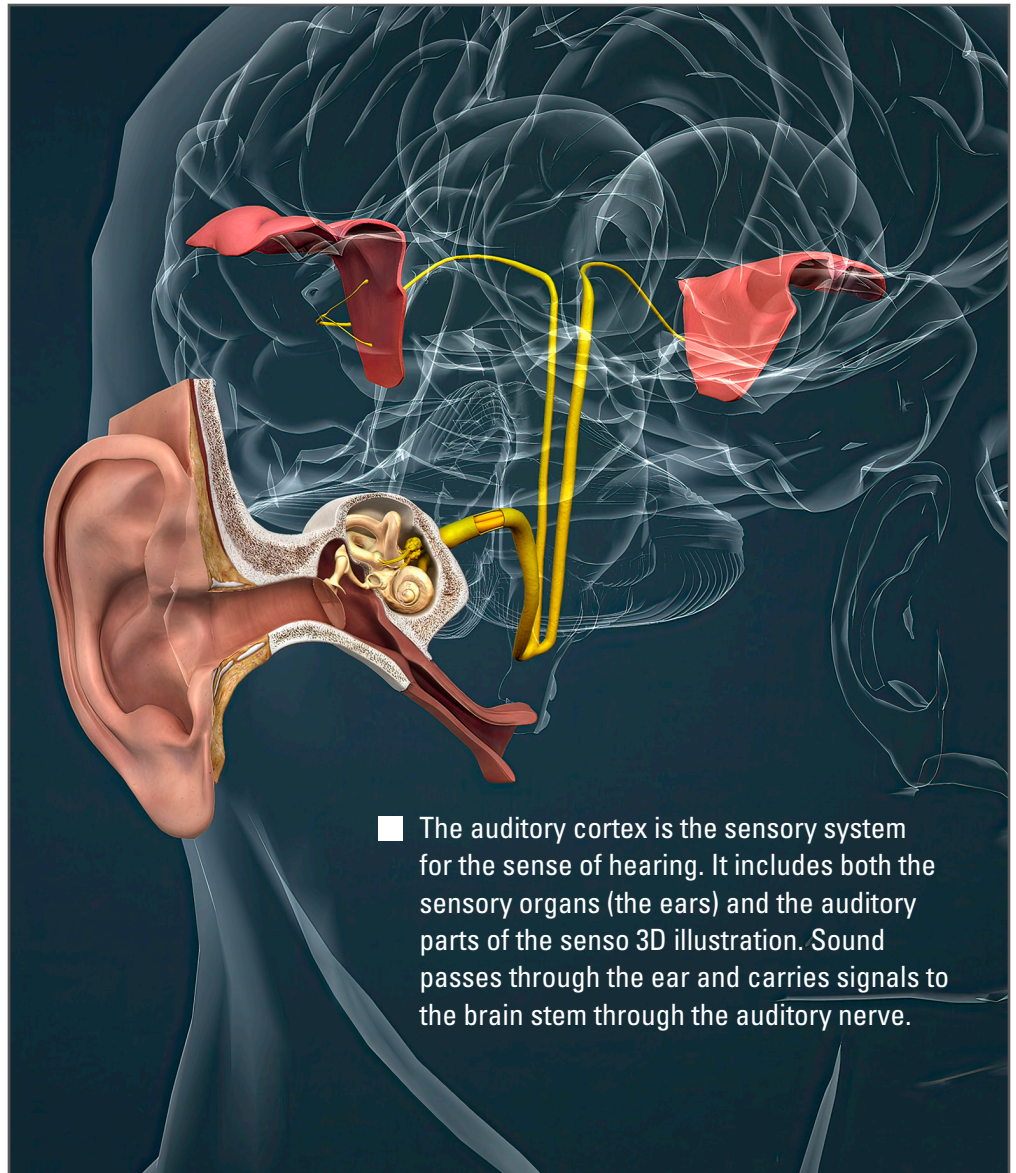
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**Dr. Judy Olson**  
**Owner & Doctor of Audiology**

Dr. Judy brings a rare dual perspective as both a hearing healthcare provider and long-time hearing aid wearer. Having experienced firsthand what proper treatment can achieve, she's dedicated her career to using best practices to help patients reconnect with their world.

Expertly trained in tinnitus care, Dr. Judy has successfully treated thousands of patients, helping them reduce tinnitus and restore vital ear-to-brain connections. She pioneered the HearBest Optimization Method—our gold standard approach ensuring personalized treatment for each guest's unique hearing and cognitive needs.



■ The auditory cortex is the sensory system for the sense of hearing. It includes both the sensory organs (the ears) and the auditory parts of the sensory system. Sound passes through the ear and carries signals to the brain stem through the auditory nerve.

sound signals, they are transmitted to the brain in the form of stimuli or electrical signals. The auditory cortex interprets the signals to help us understand.

### **So, what are the signs of auditory cortex damage?**

The brain will start processing at a much slower speed. For example, while talking to a person who talks fast, you may miss out on a few words. Your ears can hear the person, but the brain will not process all words, thus making you miss out on a few words from each sentence.

Alcohol does, however, affect your ears also. Your ears contain very fine

hairs that generate nervous stimuli when they vibrate and send electrical signals to your brain. Research has shown that drinking too much alcohol can have a profound effect on these crucial fine hairs. This is where a drinker's hearing can be damaged. It seems that the alcohol creates a toxic environment, thereby weakening the hairs and making them fail. And while hair grows back on many parts of the body, this is not the case with the ears. Rather, your hearing will simply degrade gradually.

### **Cocktail Deafness**

Have you ever noticed that after a few drinks at a bar, it actually becomes



a bit harder to pick up fully on conversations? This is called temporary alcohol-induced deafness, cocktail deafness, or the cocktail party effect. While this is generally temporary, with regular intake of alcohol, it can become permanent.

### Can alcohol cause tinnitus?

The link between tinnitus (ringing in the ears) and alcohol has been well established as the blood vessels around the ears expand. When this happens, more blood will flow to the ears causing that fuzziness we call “a buzz”. Research-

ers has found that the response from those who drink frequently is that tinnitus is often present. If this is you, please visit **HearBest.com** or schedule a consultation with a hearing specialist today.

The bottom line: it is vital that you keep your drinking to social events and moderate consumption while at home. Studies have also shown that a glass of red wine a day can be helpful to hearing, so we’re not telling you to quit altogether. Just be vigilant and be sure to deal with any problems which may arise.

*\*If you feel you or someone you love might be struggling with alcoholism, call the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence at 1-866-480-7044 to take the first step toward recovery, a healthier life and better hearing.*

## Brain Healthy Recipe

### Sweet and Sour Indian Chicken



#### Ingredients

- 3 pounds chicken thighs, skinless, bone-in
- 1/3 cup flour
- 4 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 medium onions, sliced thinly
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons fresh ginger root, chopped
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 2 tablespoons turmeric
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cardamom
- 1/2 teaspoon cracked black pepper
- 1/3 cup red wine vinegar
- 1 3/4 cups chicken broth

#### Directions

1. Heat 3 tablespoons oil over medium high heat.
2. Dredge chicken pieces in flour to coat and brown chicken on both sides. Remove from pan and set aside.
3. In the same pan, add remaining tablespoon of oil, onions, and garlic and cook until soft and golden brown. Add sugar and spices. Cook and stir for about a minute, then add vinegar and broth.
4. Add chicken, cover, and simmer for 30 minutes. Taste sauce and add salt if necessary. Serve chicken and sauce over a bed of basmati rice with a simple green salad on the side.

## Life-Changing Hearing Success Stories



Over 1,300  
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At **HearBest** we enjoy featuring testimonials from the many patients whose lives were improved by the hearing health treatments they received at one of our Central Indiana clinics. Visit:

[hearbest.com/reviews/](https://hearbest.com/reviews/)  
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### PUPILLARY LIGHT REFLEX

The pupillary light reflex results when light is shined into either eye causing both pupils to constrict. Doctors use this reflex to determine if the reflex pathway through the midbrain has in any way been disrupted. If the reflex fails to produce a response in one or both eyes, the doctor can deduce the location of the malfunction based on which of the eyes failed to respond and which eye was stimulated.



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## Brain Game Cryptogram > Instructions: Try to decode the message.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
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# Your Hearing Care Is Health Care NEWSLETTER



A Health Care Publication from Dr. Judy Olson, AuD

May 2025



## CAUTION

**LOUD NOISE MAY CAUSE HEARING LOSS.**

Protect Your Hearing At All Times.

## BETTER HEARING & SPEECH MONTH

No one should  
risk hearing loss  
from loud sounds!

**M**ay is the month that we observe better hearing and speech to increase awareness about hearing health and successful communication. The effect of loud noises on hearing loss is preventable. For more information, please visit [HearBest.com](https://www.hearbest.com).

- Hearing loss affects a large percentage of the world's population, approximately 48 million people, both adults and children alike.
- Tens of millions of people between the age of 20 and 70 will likely experience hearing loss due to noise exposure.
- Approximately 10 to 20% of teens exhibit signs of noise-induced hearing loss.

- Hearing loss increases with age, especially if not put in check early on. Almost 40% of those over 50 years young begin experiencing hearing loss. For people over the age of 70, this number increases exponentially.
  - Over 50% of individuals (especially teens) listen to music with their earphones/headphones at loud volumes. (Please keep the volume below 60%!)
  - Loud noise is an important hearing health issue and a huge environmental risk in the world today.
- Did you know that you are born with approximately 16,000 hair cells in your inner ear?**

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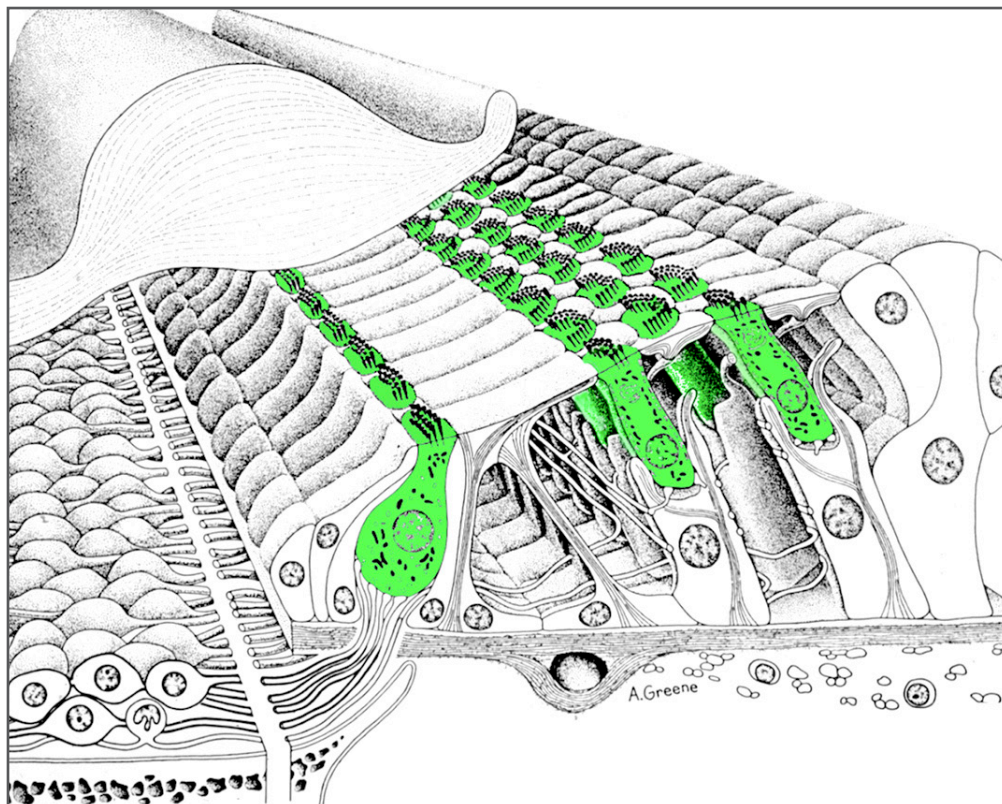
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Those hair cells permit your brain to detect sounds. When the cells are damaged or destroyed, they do not grow back. And you can lose up to 50% of hair cells before you even notice changes in your hearing. Loud noises can damage hair cells and the auditory nerve which transports information about sounds to your brain. Knowing what we now have learned about loud noises affecting your hearing, prevention is imminent.

### **So, how can you start protecting yourself immediately?**

Protect your hearing by first having it checked by a professional and also taking the following steps to avoid hearing loss from loud sounds:

- **Headphones.** When wearing headphones, keep track of how long you have them on, keep the volume down, and take breaks from the noise periodically.
- **Be Conscientious of Noise Levels.** Whether you are working at a noisy job site, at a concert, or at

any place where you must shout to be heard, then consider the noise level too high. If you are in these places often, use noise-cancelling earmuffs or earplugs.

- **Shooting a Firearm.** Another area of concern when it comes to noise is whenever you are shooting a firearm. Always use hearing protection when shooting recreationally.
- **Turn the TV Down.** Try to keep the volume on the TV down as low as possible. The same with the radio in your car.
- **Recover.** Sometimes it is inevitable that you will be exposed to loud environments. Give yourself time to recover after being exposed.
- **Be Careful What You Put In Your Ear!** This one may seem obvious, but it isn't always. Never use anything to scratch inside of your ears. When using a Q-tip, clean only around the very tip of your ear and do not reach down to the eardrum.



The wax will lift itself out to the opening naturally.

- **Keep Moving.** Exercise helps to keep the blood pumping, including in your ears and will keep the internal parts of your ears healthier.
- **Get Tested.** Whether you experience hearing loss, ringing or fullness in your ears, get tested. Also, anyone over 50 should be tested even without symptoms.

Loud noise can cause hearing loss and also tinnitus (ringing or buzzing in the ear), and hyperacusis (heightened sensitivity to sound). Frequent contact to loud environments over the years will undoubtedly have an effect on how well you hear later in life, even after exposure has ceased. Be vigilant now to protect your hearing later.

It's important to know that those who live with untreated hearing loss are at risk of becoming isolated from their family and friends and suffering from depression and anxiety. There is increased risks of falls, higher healthcare costs, dementia, and cognitive decline, together with an overall lower quality of life.

This May, we urge you to not only have a hearing test done but also to spread the word to others. Noise-induced hearing loss IS preventable! And encourage your children to adopt healthy hearing habits before it's too late!

Please visit on [HearBest.com](https://www.hearbest.com) for more information and tips to help you on your healthy hearing journey.

## Life-Changing Hearing Success Stories



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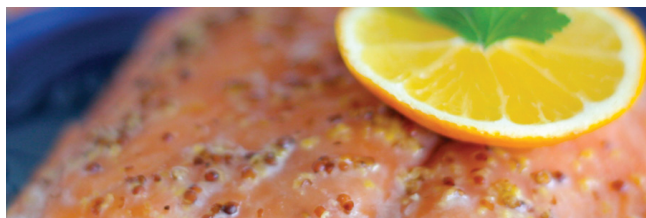
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## Brain Healthy Recipe

### Almond Orange Salmon



#### Ingredients

- 4 salmon fillets (6 oz each)
- Zest and juice of 1 orange
- 2/3 cup almonds, chopped
- 1 tablespoon flat leaf parsley, chopped finely (can use a different herb if you prefer)
- Olive oil
- Salt and pepper

#### Directions

1. Bring salmon to room temperature by leaving it out on the counter for approximately 30 minutes.
2. Preheat oven to 275 degrees F. Place a baking rack in a sheet pan.
3. Combine orange zest, orange juice, almonds, parsley, ½ teaspoon of salt, and ½ teaspoon of pepper in a small bowl. Set aside.
4. Put salmon filets skin side down on the rack.
5. Drizzle each fillet with about 1 teaspoon of olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place pan in oven and cook for 20 minutes.
6. Pat almond mixture onto salmon and return to oven for an additional 5 minutes, until nuts are toasted.
7. Salmon will be cooked through, although color will remain vibrant and flesh will be soft.



### PERIPHERAL NIGHT VISION

At night, our peripheral vision is better than our foveal (straight on) vision. Hikers at night do better when they look slightly above the trail, and airplane pilots are taught to look for traffic out of the sides of their eyes. This is because our rod cells, photoreceptors that respond best to dim light, are located mostly in the periphery of the retina.



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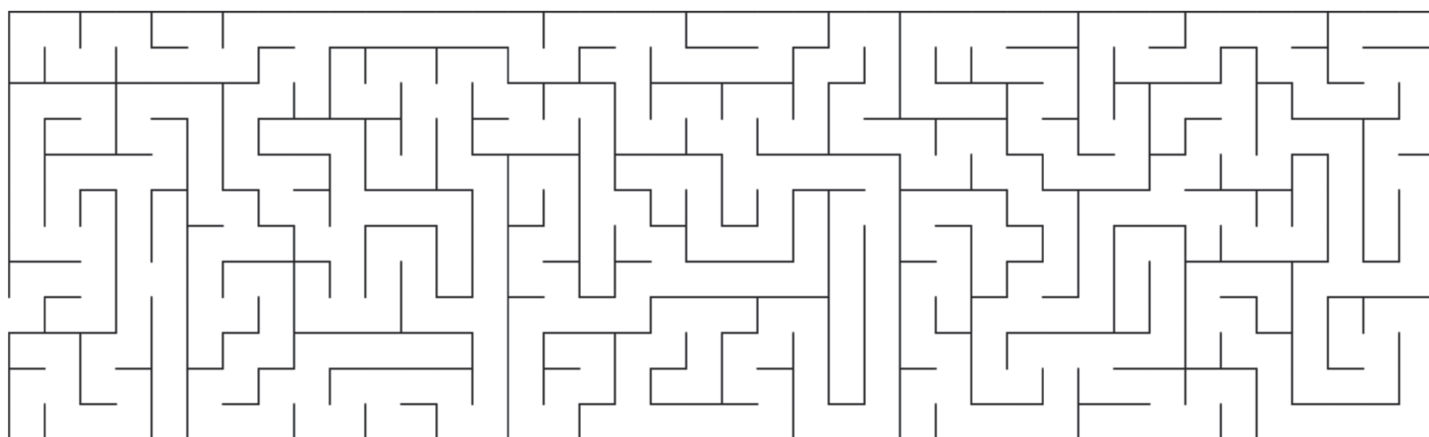
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## Brain Game

Maze > Instructions: Find your way through the maze.





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June 2025



## ALZHEIMER'S & BRAIN AWARENESS MONTH Early Detection is Vital!

Throughout the month of June each year, the Alzheimer's Association promotes awareness around the globe of the mind-robbing disease of Alzheimer's and supports the movement by asking people to wear purple in support of training your brain to fight the disease.

Let's all do our part to aid in the fight and get our purple on!

An estimated 47 million people worldwide are living and dealing with the effects of Alzheimer's and dementia. For more information, please visit [HearBest.com](https://www.hearbest.com).

### Improve Cognitive Health

How can you stay cognitively fit and keep your brain healthy?

While genetics can play a role, there are things you can do to improve your risk of Alzheimer's and dementia by talking care of your brain health and cognitive fitness.

#### Eat a healthy diet.

Research shows that millions of Americans are suffering with declines in social, physical, mental, and brain health. In fact, dietary deficiencies have been linked to mental health and neuropsychological disorders such as Alzheimer's, other forms of dementia, Parkinson's, and other chronic medical disorders.

Your chances of developing the memory-robbing disease of Alzheimer's or dementia are significantly lower when

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## Dr. Darrow's NEW ONLINE Seminar...

### Seniors Need to Avoid Falling at All Costs...



In this short, 15-minute, online seminar Dr. Keith N. Darrow, PhD, explains how hearing loss puts you at risk of falling as you age.

**FallingSeniors.com**



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you eat to have a healthy brain. It is one of your most vital organs and must be taken care of properly. Stay away from the below foods, eat a healthy diet, be positive and happy. This will keep your brain functioning at best levels as you age.

- **Sugar**
- **Processed cheese**
- **White foods (bread, rice, etc.)**
- **Processed meats**
- **Alcohol**
- **Microwave popcorn**
- **Trans fats**
- **Highly processed foods**
- **Margarine**
- **MSG**

#### **Exercise regularly.**

Exercising regularly will make your heart and blood circulatory system more efficient. It will also help to lower your cholesterol and keep your blood pressure at a healthy level, decreasing your risk of developing Alzheimer's and some forms of dementia. Research from Dr. Kramer, at the University of Illinois, found that brain volume (as measured in an MRI) actually increases in people who regularly exercise. For most people, a minimum of 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week, such as cycling or fast walking, is recommended. Recommended exercises to help maintain a

healthy lifestyle and possibly reduce your risk include:

**Cycling on a stationary bicycle.** Cycling on a stationary bicycle can be a favorite as it can be done while watching TV. 15 to 30 minutes on the bicycle is ideal to get the heart rate up.

There are additional resistance and strength exercises that can also be healthy for the body, and mind. Remember – always consult your physician before starting a new exercise regimen.

#### **Manage your stress.**

Get your stress levels in check with these proven techniques:

**Breathe!** Quiet your stress response with deep, abdominal breathing. Restorative breathing is powerful, simple, and free!

#### **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 your dog, yoga, or a soothing bath.

**Nourish Inner Peace.** Regular meditation, prayer, reflection, and religious practice may immunize you against the damaging effects of stress.

**Make Fun a Priority.** All work and no play is not good for your stress levels or your brain. Make time for leisure activities that bring you joy, whether it be stargazing, playing the piano, or working on your bike.

**Keep Your Sense of Humor.** This includes the ability to laugh at yourself. The act of laughing helps your body fight stress.

**Be sure to make time for meditation.** Resting your mind may be more helpful than you think in dementia prevention. A recent study from Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center has found that meditation plays an important role in slowing the progression of Alzheimer's. Individuals who performed meditation and yoga regularly had less atrophy (shrinkage of the brain) and had better brain connectivity than the control group. Meditation can increase protective tissue in the brain, can help you feel less stressed and reduces the hormone cortisol, which has been known to increase the risk of developing dementia.

**Get enough sleep.**

A new study indicates that lack of sleep may lead to Alzheimer's. Emerging research from the University of

Rochester Medical Center has found that the waste-draining system they call the "glymphatic system" is ten times more active during sleep than while awake. This nocturnal cleaning system removes proteins called amyloid-beta, which accumulate into the plaques that contribute to Alzheimer's and dementia.

**Nurture social contacts.**

Both social isolation and depression are major risk factors for the development of dementia, and both increase as we age. Being a lifelong learner and staying active is important to maintain a healthy, active brain, and can also reduce your risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Some studies have shown that social activities, larger social networks, and a history of social contact are associated with better cognitive function and reduced risk for cognitive decline.

## Brain Healthy Recipe

### Chocolate Fudge and Fruit



#### Ingredients

- Ingredients
- 16 dried dates, pitted
- Unsweetened coconut or almond milk
- 2 ½ Tbsp cacao powder or unsweetened cocoa powder
- Seasonal fruit

#### Directions

1. Place dates in a bowl and cover with milk. Refrigerate overnight.
2. In a blender, blend dates, 2/3 cup of the soaking milk, and cacao powder for 5 minutes, until smooth. Transfer to a serving bowl.
3. Put bite-sized pieces of seasonal fruit (such as berries, pineapple, kiwi, and/or banana) on 8 skewers.
4. Serve fruit skewers with chocolate fudge dipping sauce.

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### NO OCTOPUS BLIND SPOT

The octopus has a single layer of cells in the back of its eye. These receptor cells project directly back to the brain via the optic nerve. Because the optic nerve forms behind the receptors rather than passing through them, the octopus has no blind spot.





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## Brain Game

Word Find> Instructions: Find the hidden words in the list.

A M B E A T N A D Y O I R L S F G F B E C A O Q I P K M V M  
F I R F Y M L R Y C J I I V G T A A C M Y G H F A H A E T F  
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FORGET  
REMEMBER  
ISOLATION  
ALONE  
SCARED  
LOVE  
ABILITY  
SILENCE  
RESEARCH  
FAMILY