Alzheimer’s and Brain Awareness Month

Alzheimer’s is a form of dementia that progressively erodes memory and creates behavioral problems. It currently affects an estimated 5.5 million people, with the vast majority being age 65 or older. However, the true number of undiagnosed cases is unknown. Sadly, there is no known cure for this disease, but there are organizations dedicated to finding one.

With that goal in mind, the Alzheimer’s Association raises awareness and funds to help research the disease, and care for and support those affected by it. If you or a loved one are living with signs of Alzheimer’s, or if you’re interested in finding ways to spread awareness, visit [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org) for caregiving resources and information.

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Take Action
Awareness only goes so far toward improving your health—you also need to take action. Use this section to track your weekly progress as you establish your healthier lifestyle.

**Week 1 (5/30-6/5)** – **Create a wellness plan**
*What do you want to improve this month? Set a short-term health goal and a plan for achieving it.*

**Week 2 (6/6-6/12)** – **Get started**
*Are you ready? Begin your plan and stick to it.*

**Week 3 (6/13-6/19)** – **Look for improvement**
*How are you doing? Think about what’s working with your plan and if you need to adjust it.*

**Week 4 (6/20-6/26)** – **Keep going**
*Are the adjustments helping? Continue with your revised plan and finish the month strong.*

**Week 5 (6/27-7/3)** – **Reflect**
*Did you reach your goal? Consider what worked with the plan and what should change next month.*
Dehydration may seem like a minor ailment, but it can be quite dangerous. In fact, millions of people worldwide—many of them infants and older adults—die of dehydration each year.

Get the Facts
In the simplest terms, dehydration occurs when you lose more water than you take in and your body does not have enough water to carry out its normal functions. What’s more, even mild dehydration—as little as a 1% to 2% loss of body weight—can cause symptoms such as weakness, dizziness, and fatigue, and may have a negative effect on long-term health.

Water Loss
On average, adults lose about 2.5 liters (more than 10 cups) of water a day, simply by doing everyday tasks such as sweating, breathing, and going to the bathroom. Also lost are electrolytes—minerals such as sodium, potassium, and calcium—that maintain the balance of fluids in your body. This is before you may even think about mowing the lawn on a humid afternoon, working out at the gym, or rearranging the living room furniture—all of which cause much higher water loss.

Symptoms
Mild to moderate dehydration is likely to cause the following symptoms:
- Excessive thirst
- Sleepiness
- Dry mouth
- Few or no tears when crying
- Muscle weakness
- Headache
- Dizziness or lightheadedness

Prevent Dehydration
Preventing dehydration sounds easy enough: consume plenty of fluids and foods high in water content, like fruits and vegetables. However, how much fluid do we really need? Determining your appropriate water intake is not an exact science, as much depends on age, physical condition, activity level, environment, and individual physiology.

The best recommendation is to simply make a conscious effort to stay hydrated. In addition, make water your beverage of choice! Try drinking water with every meal and between meals. Take water breaks instead of coffee or tea breaks, and substitute sparkling water for alcohol.
HELP YOUR HEALTH WITH HUMOR

Who doesn’t love a good belly laugh? You know the kind that makes your stomach ache, your cheeks hurt, and your eyes water? Well, not only is laughing fun, it is also good for your health.

Health Benefits of Laughter

Laughter makes you feel better in the moment, and also has long-term benefits:

- It reduces stress hormones in the body by releasing endorphins in the brain.
- It can lower blood pressure.
- It improves alertness, creativity, and memory.
- Laughter increases the intake of oxygen while also stimulating the heart, lungs, and blood vessels.
- It improves the immune system.
- It helps the body produce natural painkillers.
- Laughing helps you get through tough situations and enables the body and mind to relax.

Give Yourself a Dose of Laughter

It’s easy to incorporate some healthy laughter into your day. Consider these ideas:

- Hang up silly pictures of your family and friends, comic strips, or jokes around your home and office.
- Look for the silver lining or comical aspects of everyday struggles. Associate yourself with others who try to do the same, rather than those who tend to focus on the negative.
- Whenever you feel overwhelmed or negative, watch a funny movie or television show, or play with your children or pet.
- Buy a joke book or find an author whose writing you find humorous.
- Host a game night with family and friends.
- Listen to a comedy CD on your commute to and from work.
- Do not take yourself too seriously; know when you need to relax.

You know what they say... laughter is contagious. So, spread some around to benefit your health and the health of those around you!
Outdoor Exercise Safety Tips

As we move into summer, many will want to exercise outdoors to stay active and get some fresh air. That’s great news, as experts recommend at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity each week. Working out in hot and humid weather can put extra stress on your body; however, there are simple precautions you can take to protect yourself.

Workout Tips

By moving your workout outdoors, you can boost your mood and improve your concentration. Also, you don’t need to stick to your own yard or neighborhood. Jogging trails, exercise parks, sports fields, and stairs provide endless opportunities to switch up your workout. Keep in mind the following tips to safely exercise outside during the summer:

- **Avoid the hottest part of the day.** If possible, plan your workout before 10 a.m. or after 3 p.m. to dodge those strong sun rays.
- **Wear light-colored clothing.** Dark colors absorb the heat, while light colors will reflect the sun. Lightweight, loose-fitting clothing will help air circulate and keep you cool.
- **Apply sunscreen.** Opt for a broad-spectrum sunscreen that’s at least 30 SPF. Reapply every two hours, even if the label says it’s sweatproof. Wearing a wide-brimmed hat can also protect your face from sun exposure.
- **Stay hydrated with water.** Drink water before you head out, and try to take sips every 15 minutes during your workout—whether you’re thirsty or not.
- **Replenish your electrolytes.** Instead of reaching for a sports drink after a workout, consider replacing electrolytes through real food like chia seeds, kale, coconut, or fruits and vegetables.
- **Listen to your body.** If you’re feeling dizzy, faint or nauseous, stop immediately. Sit down in the shade and drink some water until you’re feeling better.

Your body may need to adapt to outdoor workouts, so follow its lead and gradually pick up the pace or intensity. As always, talk to your doctor before you start a new exercise regimen.
Health Benefits of Gardening
It’s likely that you may already have a garden. According to the Garden Media Group, 16 million people started gardening during the pandemic.

As we enter the growing season, gardening is a great way to spend time outdoors—and get some exercise. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention counts activities like raking and cutting grass as light to moderate exercise—while shoveling, digging, and chopping wood are vigorous exercise.

In addition to physical activity, consider these health benefits of gardening:

- Increased vitamin D levels essential for body functions
- Boosted self-esteem
- Improved mood
- Reduced stress and anxiety

Talk to your doctor to learn more about ways to manage your well-being.

5 Herbs to Grow Indoors

Not everyone has space for an outdoor garden, so consider keeping your kitchen supplied with fresh herbs year-round. The following herbs grow well on a windowsill:

- Basil
- Cilantro
- Mint
- Parsley
- Rosemary

3 Ways to Snack Smartly

It’s completely normal to snack throughout the workday. However, it can especially be tempting to opt for the fast, easy (but unhealthy) option if you are working from home. Keep the following three tips in mind to help you snack smartly during the workday at the office or at home.

1. **Plan your snacking.** Think ahead so you don’t desperately reach for unhealthy items. At the beginning of the week, make or pre-portion your healthy snacks so they’re ready to go.

2. **Be mindful of portions.** Avoid eating directly out of the bag or original container, and portion your snacks before eating.

3. **Choose healthy snacks.** Nibble on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and healthy fats to stay satisfied and full. Pass on the junk food since chips, candy, and cookies can leave you feeling sluggish.

You might not have control over where you’re working, but try to work away from the kitchen. Click [here](#) to learn about nutritionist-approved snack options.

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Cucumber Blueberry Salad

Makes: 4 servings

**Vinaigrette Ingredients**
- 1 ½ Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 2 Tbsp. white balsamic vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. lime juice
- 1 tsp. sugar
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. black pepper

**Salad Ingredients**
- 1 cup fresh blueberries
- 1 medium cucumber (chopped)
- 4 cups fresh arugula
- ½ medium red onion (thinly sliced)
- ¼ cup reduced-fat feta cheese (crumbled)
- 2 Tbsp. walnuts (coarsely chopped)
- 4 slices whole-grain bread

**Preparations**

1. Whisk together vinaigrette ingredients in a small bowl.
2. Mix together all salad ingredients, except bread, in a large bowl.
3. Add the vinaigrette to the salad—and toss to serve.
4. Toast bread, then cut each slice into four pieces.

**Nutritional Information**

(per serving)

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Source: MyPlate