

Managing Health Conditions for a Healthy Brain

Common health conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, and depression can increase your risk for cognitive decline and Alzheimer's disease.^{1,2} Managing these conditions will not only help you control their symptoms—it will boost your brain health, too.

You Can Take Action

Consider these tips to track and control chronic conditions that can affect your brain health:

Follow a plan for high blood pressure.

Your heart health is directly linked to your brain health, and hypertension, or high blood pressure, is a significant risk factor for Alzheimer's disease. If you have high blood pressure or if you are at-risk for the condition, work with your doctor to develop a personalized plan, including diet, exercise, and potentially medication.

Manage diabetes. Diabetes is a risk factor for cognitive decline and Alzheimer's. If you have or are at risk for diabetes, speak with your doctor to create and follow a set plan, including lifestyle changes and, potentially, medication. By reducing the negative effects of diabetes, you can also protect your brain health.

Talk to a doctor if you are experiencing depression.

Depression may increase your risk of cognitive decline and lead to other risk factors like social isolation, poor diet, and lack of exercise. You may experience symptoms other than mood changes, such as lack of energy, lack of interest in daily activities, or difficulty sleeping.³ If you have symptoms of depression, talk to your doctor or another health professional about your concerns and they can help you find health resources.

Plan and check in on your health regularly.

Chronic conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, and depression can change over time. Make sure you have these conditions under control by regularly checking indicators like blood pressure and blood sugar, speaking with your doctor, and adjusting your health plans for any changes.

1. Risk reduction of cognitive decline and dementia: WHO guidelines. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2019.
2. Livingston, G., Sommerlad, A., Orgeta, V., Costafreda, S. G., Huntley, J., Ames, D., Ballard, C., Banerjee, S., Burns, A., Cohen-Mansfield, J., Cooper, C., Fox, N., Gitlin, L. N., Howard, R., Kales, H. C., Larson, E. B., Ritchie, K., Rockwood, K., Sampson, E. L., Samus, Q., Mukadam, N. (2017). Dementia prevention, intervention, and care. *Lancet* (London, England), 390(10113), 2673–2734. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(17\)31363-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(17)31363-6)
3. <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>