

Unlocking the Secrets of Brain Health



- 86+ years, started by Railway Mail Carriers
- 2+ million members worldwide
- One of the largest carriers in the FEHB
- Exclusively Federal / Postal / Annuitants
- Extensive nationwide network of doctors, dentists, hospitals and other providers
- Your friend in federal

Agenda

- Brain facts and statistics
- Socialization
- Mental fitness
- Physical self-care
 - Exercise
 - Food and nutrition
 - Medical care
 - Sleep
- Q&A



Did you know...

- Your brain weighs in at three pounds and processes 70,000 thoughts each day, using 100 billion neurons that connect at more than 500 trillion points through synapses that travel 300 miles/hour
- The signals that travel through these interconnected neurons form the basis of memories, thoughts and feelings
- The brain generates enough electricity to power a light bulb
- The brain is always busy

Did you know...

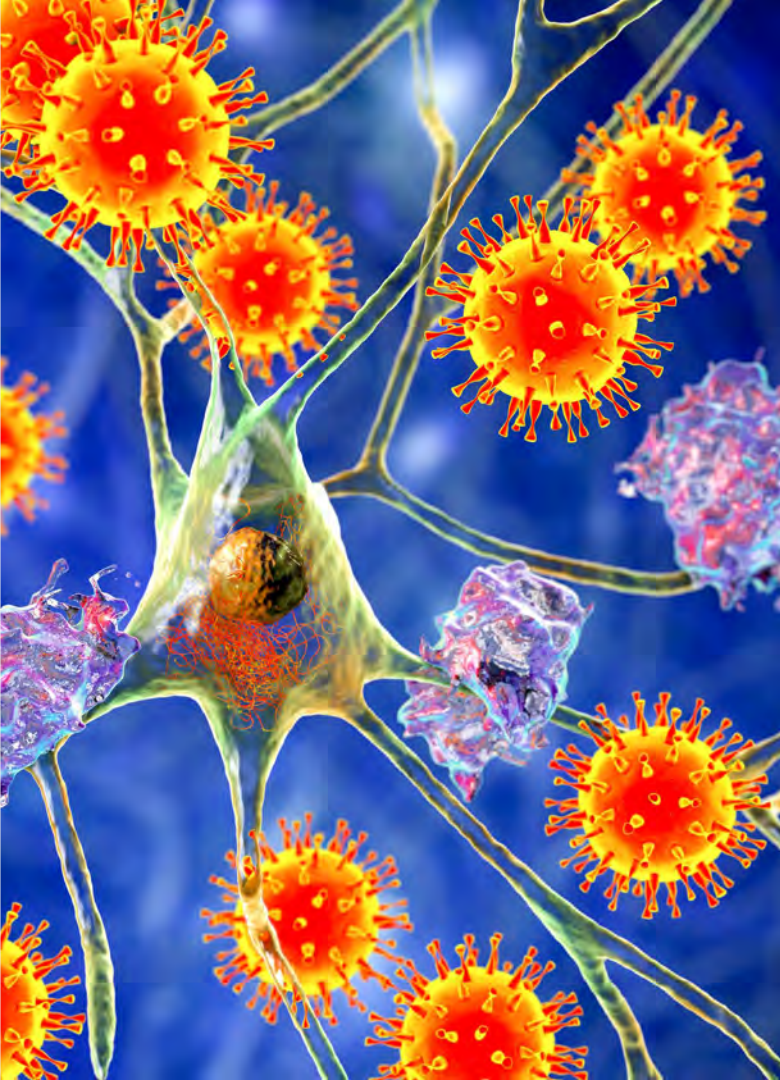
- The brain gets better with use
- The brain is resilient
- A study published in JAMA Neurology found the top risks for dementia include social isolation, alcohol use disorder, depression
- According to the Global Burden of Disease Study, neurological disorders like stroke, Alzheimer's disease, and other dementias, as well as traumatic brain injury, collectively contribute to a substantial burden of disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) worldwide

Source: [Healthybrains.org](https://www.healthybrains.org)

Functions of the brain

- Thinking
- Perception
- Emotion
- Signaling
- Physical
- Behavior





Signs of impaired brain function

- Thinking difficulties
- Problems focusing
- Extreme emotional highs and lows
- Sleep concerns
- Eating issues
- Memory problems

Source: National Institute of Mental Health



Type 3 Diabetes

- Alzheimer's disease is known as type 3 diabetes
- Occurs when neurons in the brain become unable to respond to insulin, which is essential for basic tasks like memory and learning

Source: [National Library of Medicine](#)

Secrets to brain health: socialization

Social determinants of health



- Education
- Access to health care
- Built environment
- Loneliness and social isolation

Source: Centers for Disease Control

Social interaction

- Treasure your loved ones
- Branch out
- Volunteer
- Be interested
- The power of pets

Source: [Healthybrains.org](https://www.healthybrains.org)



Mental fitness



Build your brain reserve

- Study
- Learn
- Create
- Play

Source: [Cleveland Clinic](#)

Exercise your brain

- Puzzles
- Music
- Socializing
- Mindfulness
- De-stress





How to de-stress

- Practice saying “no”
- Keep a list
- 10-minute brain breaks
- Mindfulness
- Positive thoughts
- Gratitude journaling
- Imagery

Source: [Healthline](#)



Mindful meditation benefits

- Reduce stress
- Help control anxiety
- Promote emotional health
- Enhance self-awareness
- Lengthen attention span
- Reduce age-related memory loss

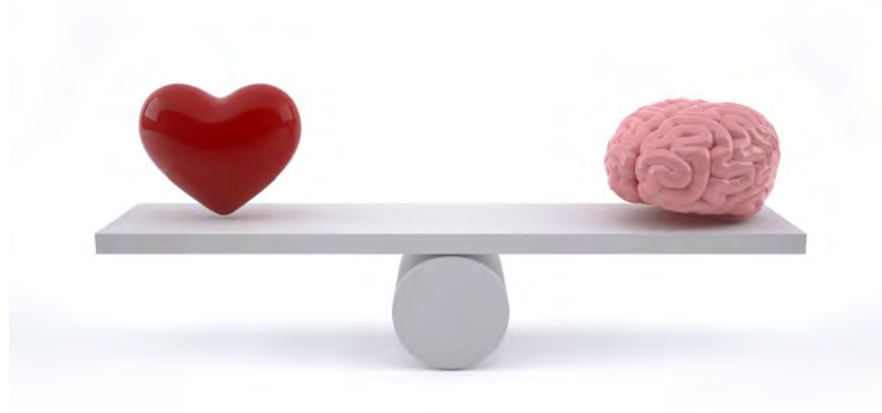
Source: [Healthline](#)



Physical self-care

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

- Cardiovascular endurance
- Strength training
- Flexibility
- Neuromotor exercises



American College of Sports Medicine's exercise recommendations

	Cardiorespiratory endurance	Muscular strength & endurance	Flexibility	Neuromotor
Frequency	≥5 days per week	2 times per week	3-5 times per week	2- days per week
Intensity	Moderate intensity (40-59% of max heart rate)	60-70% of 1RM	To the point of tightness or slight discomfort	
Time	≥30 minutes per day	1-2 sets of 8-12 repetitions for each major muscle group	Hold each static stretch for 10-30 seconds per stretch	20-30 minutes per day
Type	Prolonged, rhythmic activities using large muscle groups (e.g., walking, biking, swimming)	Body weight, machines, resistance bands and/or free weights	Static, dynamic, PNF, Tai Chi or Yoga	Motor skills (e.g., balance, agility, coordination)

MIND diet

- **M**editerranean- Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH)
- **I**ntervention for
- **N**eurodegenerative
- **D**elay





Hydrate for health

- Your brain is made of 73% water
- The brain doesn't register liquid calories
- Switch sodas, juices, sports drinks, etc. to water
- Water is best
- Infuse your water with fruits, herbs

Source: Mayo Clinic Health System



Limit or avoid

- Highly processed foods
- Sugar foods and beverages
- Trans fats
- Alcohol
- Highly salted foods
- Artificial sweeteners
- Tobacco

Source: Eating Well



Control medical risks

- Annual check-up
- Doctor's recommendations
- Medications
- Lifestyle

Source: [Healthybrains.org](https://www.healthybrains.org)

Medical conditions

- Hypertension
- Obesity
- Diabetes

Source: [Healthybrains.org](https://www.healthybrains.org)





Quality & quantity sleep

- Fight depression
- Find joy
- Build resilience
- Manage stress
- Meditation

Source: [Healthybrains.org](https://www.healthybrains.org)

GEHA member resources

- Elevate and Elevate Plus plans
 - Rally digital health platform
 - Learn more at geha.com/WellnessPays
- High, Standard and HDHP plans
 - GEHA Well-being portal
 - Learn more at geha.com/HealthRewards
- All GEHA plans
 - Healthy recipes and health and wellness articles
 - Learn more at geha.com/Blog
- GEHA website for benefit information geha.com

Wrap-up

- Brain facts and statistics
- Socialization
- Mental fitness
- Physical self-care
 - Exercise
 - Food and nutrition
 - Medical care
 - Sleep



Thank you

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