

Socialize with Your Family

With today's busy lifestyles, finding time to spend with your family takes effort and commitment. Here are several ideas on how you can spend more quality time with your family:

- Spend time talking with your child. Talk about any topic of interest to both of you. Talk about your day's events and the child's feelings about them.
- Prepare a meal together as a family. Let each family member participate in some way.
- Plan a family game night. Game nights provide time to enjoy each other's company and can be a learning experience too.
- Read to one another. Choose a book that everyone in the family would enjoy – such as an old classic like *Tom Sawyer* – and spend time several days a week reading it together. Visit your local library for a great selection of books to read.
- Attend local cultural events – like the theater, symphony, ballet, and art exhibits. By exposing your family to various cultural activities, they become well-rounded individuals.
- Pack a healthy picnic lunch and enjoy it on a warm afternoon at a local park. Run and play together after you eat lunch.



Sharpen Your Mind

- Pay attention to where you put items, like your glasses, keys, or wallet.
- Say out loud or to yourself when you put something away or take some action. For example, "I put my glasses on my bedside table" or "The blue notebook is in the desk drawer on the right."
- When you learn a new name, repeat it: "It's nice to meet you, Sam." "See you later, Betty."
- Write things down. Writing is a great memory tool. Notes and lists help you keep track of things, and the act of writing something down will help you remember the information. Keep a note pad handy so you can easily write down where you parked your car or an appointment you need to make.
- Create an image in your mind. A mental picture of a name or location makes it easier to recall.
- Establish cues so you don't have to commit everything to memory. Keep a calendar in your purse or on the wall and make notes of events and special dates you want to remember. Set the oven timer for when you have to leave or start another activity.
- Slow down and do one thing at a time, giving each activity your full attention. If possible, limit or reduce noise, distractions, and interruptions.
- Enhance your mind by doing crossword puzzles or word finds. Read non-fiction books about new skills or activities you can enjoy.



Start Protecting Your Brain Against Alzheimer's

If you're in your 40s or beyond, the idea of losing your memory to Alzheimer's disease can be frightening. With a lot of medical information available, you may wonder what you as an individual can do to prevent it.

Researchers now say that when you take care of your heart, you're also taking care of your brain at the same time. The link between heart disease and Alzheimer's is growing. The Alzheimer's Association predicts that it will continue to grow. The heart is the organ that supplies essential elements to every part of the body, and the brain is one of the most important parts.

Risk factors for the two diseases are essentially the same. One study showed that people with high cholesterol in their 40s and 50s were three to five times more likely to become demented later in life. Blood vessels become stiff and lead to

a decrease in nutrients to the brain.

Some things you can do now:

- ❖ Stop smoking. Smoking 10 to 20 cigarettes per day can double or triple the risk of dementia.
- ❖ Exercise regularly to send oxygen-rich blood flowing to the brain.
- ❖ Take steps to reduce stress throughout life. Meditate, walk, garden, or work on a hobby.
- ❖ Eat a rainbow of fruits and vegetables to get plenty of phytochemicals and antioxidants. Drink enough water to rid your body of toxins.
- ❖ Keep your blood pressure under control with diet and exercise or with medication.
- ❖ Control diabetes and use medications, diet, and exercise to keep blood sugar in the normal range.