



MY COGNITIVE HEALTH

#MYCOGNITIVEHEALTH

Alzheimer Society
MONTREAL

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RECEIVING A DIAGNOSIS OF A NEUROCOGNITIVE DISORDER CAN BE **DESTABILIZING** AND **STRESSFUL**.

FIRST OF ALL, KNOW THAT **YOU ARE NOT ALONE**.

The Alzheimer Society of Montreal is at your side to support you as you adapt to your new situation.

Neurocognitive disorders don't take away your ability to experience emotions and enjoy a good quality of life. **What has been important to you during your life will always remain important.**

A DIAGNOSIS OF A NEUROCOGNITIVE DISORDER DOES NOT MEAN THAT YOUR LIFE IS OVER.

WHY A TOOLKIT?

To this day, there is no way to stop the progression of a neurocognitive disorder. However, **there are many things that you can do to preserve a healthy lifestyle and slow the progression of your neurocognitive disorder.** Research shows that there are tangible benefits of adopting a healthy lifestyle in order to enhance your overall health and well-being as much as possible.¹

This toolkit aims to support you in your daily life by providing strategies and resources to maintain your cognitive health and live well with a neurocognitive disorder. You may need to seek some help to adjust to your changing abilities and participate in meaningful activities that bring you pleasure. The *My Cognitive Health* toolkit is here to meet your needs and enhance your well-being!

¹ Alzheimer Society of Canada. (2020). *Living well with a neurocognitive disorder*. [Online] <https://alzheimer.ca/fr/les-aides-et-le-soutien/je-suis-atteint-dun-trouble-neurocognitif/bien-vivre-avec-un-trouble>, page consulted on September 19, 2020.

1

ADOPT HEALTHY EATING HABITS

Although people with neurocognitive disorders do not need special diets, eating a well-balanced and nutritious diet is extremely beneficial. Healthy eating habits not only improve your overall health, but they help maintain brain function and slow memory decline in the long run.

**WHAT'S GOOD
FOR YOUR HEART
IS GOOD FOR
YOUR BRAIN!**



WHERE TO START?

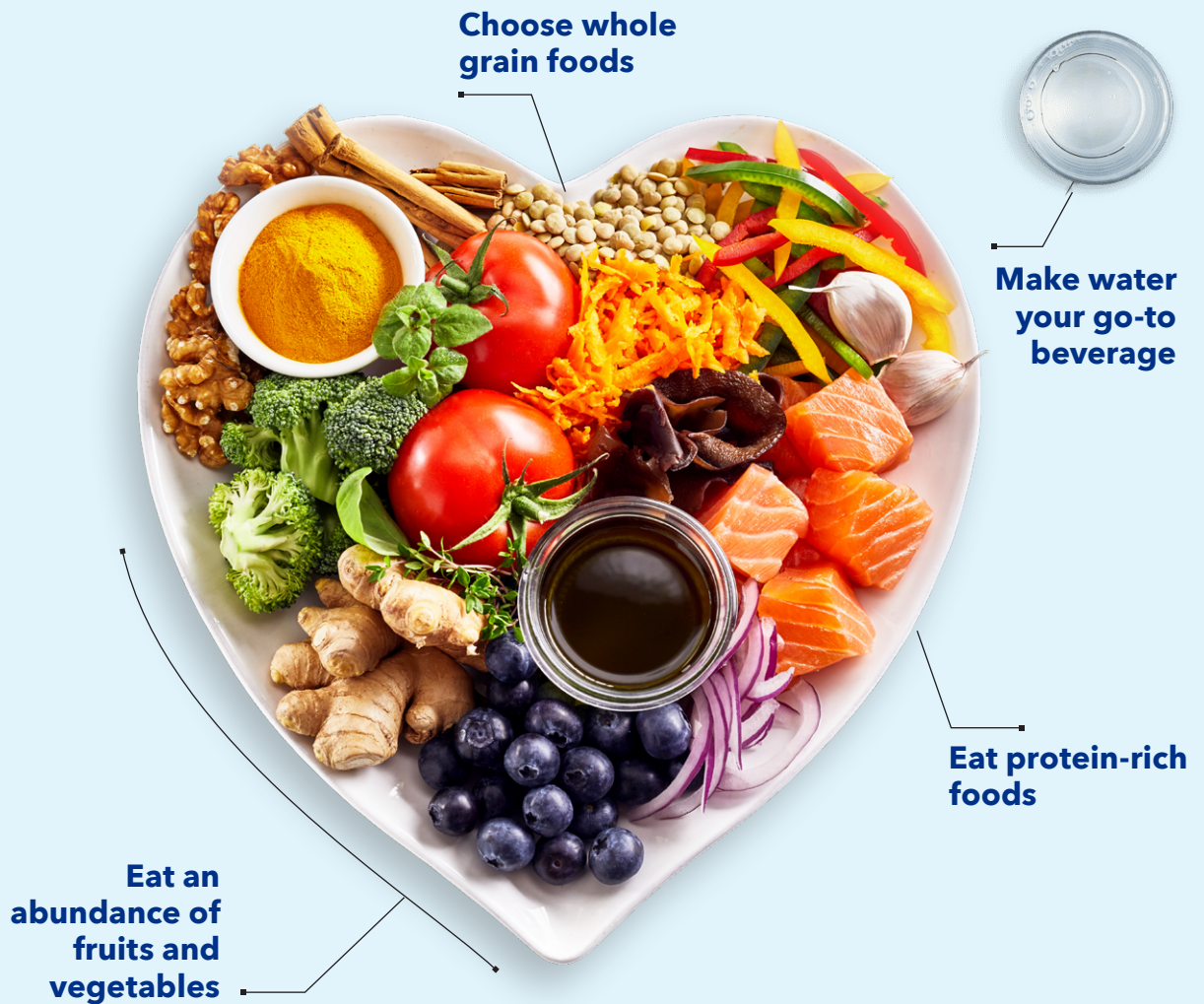
Eat a variety of foods, especially fruits, vegetables and whole grain products.

Use Canada's Food Guide to adopt a healthy diet, unless your doctor has recommended a particular diet for medical reasons, such as diabetes.

Limit your intake of salt, alcohol and caffeine.²

**STAY HYDRATED BY
DRINKING ENOUGH WATER.**

NO NEED TO BECOME A NUTRITIONIST, JUST SLIGHTLY ADAPT YOUR DIET!



2

REDUCE YOUR STRESS

With time, stress can cause a chemical reaction that damages the brain and can negatively impact other areas of the body. By reducing your stress level, you improve the health of your brain.

Symptoms of chronic stress can include:

- ✓ **Emotional symptoms:** depression, tension, anxiety, anger, worry, fear
- ✓ **Physical symptoms:** headache, fatigue, insomnia, sweating
- ✓ **Mental symptoms:** poor concentration, memory loss, indecision, confusion
- ✓ **Behavioral symptoms:** moving constantly, overeating, misusing alcohol and drugs

Regular exercise is the most effective tool for reducing stress and improving mood.

What is important is to take time for yourself, exercise, relax, engage in fun activities such as hobbies and socializing with others – these are all essential elements of your health and well-being.

Everyone needs to find a balance that will limit stress and help maintain optimal health.

To learn more about the impact of stress on neurocognitive disorders, visit the "Mild Cognitive Impairment and Alzheimer's disease" section on the website of the Centre for Studies on Human Stress (CSHS): www.humanstress.ca

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt, is shown in profile, sitting in a meditative pose (lotus or similar) against a clear blue sky. Her eyes are closed, and her hands are resting on her knees in a mudra. The lighting is soft, suggesting a calm, serene atmosphere.

THE GOAL IS TO **STRIKE**
A BALANCE!

NO NEED TO BECOME
A MASTER OF MEDITATION,
BUT **"RELAX"** IS AN
EXCELLENT MANTRA.

3

BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

One of the best ways to **reduce stress** is to be **physically active**.

People who exercise regularly are less likely to have a heart disease, diabetes or a stroke - these three conditions are all associated with the increased risk of negatively impacting a neurocognitive disorder.

Physical activity promotes blood flow to the brain, which nourishes the cells with nutrients and oxygen, while contributing to the formation of new cells. Plus, regular exercise helps reduce stress and improve mood.

You are not an athlete? See it as an "activity" and not as an "exercise".

Integrate pleasure into your activities – Plan a physical activity with another person to stay motivated and active, and to reap the benefits of social interactions for your brain health.

To learn more about the benefits of physical activity on aging, visit the *Age Better* section of www.participaction.com/en-ca

**NO NEED TO BECOME
A CHAMPION TRIATHLETE.**

**A BRISK DAILY WALK
IS AN GREAT ROUTINE !**



4

MAINTAIN AN ACTIVE SOCIAL LIFE

Maintaining social connections helps you keep your brain in good shape.

It has been demonstrated that the brains of people who have regular social interactions function better than those of people who don't.

Social activity also allows people with neurocognitive disorders to thrive and lead fulfilled lives, which improves their quality of life.

**INTERESTING FACT: THE IMPACT
OF LONELINESS ON A PERSON'S
HEALTH IS EQUIVALENT TO
SMOKING 15 CIGARETTES PER DAY!**

**GOOD NEWS: TALKING WITH
A FRIEND IS A LOT EASIER THAN
GIVING UP SMOKING!**

Social interaction appears to have a protective effect that helps slow the progression of neurocognitive disorders.

Simply put, maintain social connections to keep your brain in shape!

To find out more about leisure activities and events in the Montréal region, visit the Leisure and Events section at:

www.fadoq.ca/en/ile-de-montreal/leisure-and-events

DISCUSS ! EXCHANGE ! TELL YOUR STORY !

Double the benefits by combining a social interaction with a physical activity.

NO NEED TO BECOME THE MOST
POPULAR PERSON IN TOWN. **THE**
GOAL IS TO **GROW OLD IN**
HEALTH AND HAPPINESS!



5

SLEEP

A lack of sleep can affect memory, mood and functional capabilities.

Sleep helps consolidate memory and eliminates toxins that play a role in some neurocognitive disorders. Hence the importance of a good restful sleep.

In fact, the benefits of a nap are so numerous that they are dreamlike!

Here are some easy tips to promote good sleep:

- ✓ **Organize an evening routine to prepare your brain for the upcoming period of rest**
- ✓ **Avoid using electronic devices at least 30 minutes before going to bed**
- ✓ **Avoid coffee in the afternoon**
- ✓ **Take a hot bath**
- ✓ **Exercise**

NO NEED TO BECOME A SLEEP SPECIALIST.

BUT THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP TO MAKE YOU FEEL REFRESHED!

6

COGNITIVE STIMULATION

Cognitive stimulation, also known as mental activity, helps the brain compensate for cognitive decline. By stimulating our brain, we increase our chances of delaying the onset of symptoms of a neurocognitive disorder.³

Using cognitive skills will help maintain a good quality of life.

Activities that involve your brain do not have to be difficult to be beneficial to your cognitive health. By choosing activities according to your interests, you will be more likely to incorporate them into your routine and also enjoy the pleasure they bring you.

- ✓ **Practice adapted activities and challenging games such as crosswords, puzzles and chess**
- ✓ **Do some reading**
- ✓ **Participate in cultural activities such as plays, museums and concerts**
- ✓ **Participate in social activities**
- ✓ **Develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle**

To find cognitive games to stimulate your brain, visit the *Brain Games* section of the Alzheimer Society of Canada website:

www.alzheimer.ca

³ Guylaine, BÉLIZAIRE. Anne-Marie, DAOUST. Laurence, MELANÇON. Christine, OUELLET. Vieillir en bonne santé cognitive. Association Québécoise des Neuropsychologues. 2021. [Online] <https://aqnp.ca/documentation/degeneratif/vieillir-en-bonne-sante-cognitive/#:~:text=La%20r%C3%A9serve%20cognitive%2C%20c'est,%C3%A9ventuelle%20maladie%20touchant%20la%20m%C3%A9moire,page> consulted on February 15, 2021.

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH

When we are caught up in the hustle and bustle of everyday life, we sometimes forget to take care of ourselves. It is important that you take care of your overall health as you learn to live with a neurocognitive disorder. Make sure you remain as healthy as possible.

- ✓ **Visit your doctor regularly to have a medical exam and discuss any concerns about your health.**

- ✓ **Monitor your health by keeping your blood pressure, your cholesterol level, your weight and your blood sugar within the recommended limits.**

- ✓ **Get regular eye and hearing exams. Not seeing or hearing properly can cause stress and confusion.**

**A DIAGNOSIS OF A NEUROCOGNITIVE DISORDER
DOES NOT MEAN THAT YOUR LIFE IS OVER.**

**YOU CAN ENJOY A GREAT QUALITY OF LIFE.
ADOPTING GOOD DAILY HABITS WILL HELP.**

Do you like to read? Well, keep doing it, even if it isn't as easy as it used to be. The important thing is to adapt to your new reality.

Are you more of a music lover? Revisit your favorite albums, share your favourite memories with those around you and keep making new ones.

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**TALK TO A
COUNSELLOR
TODAY.**



Alzheimer Society
MONTREAL

www.alzheimermontreal.ca

With the contribution of :

Québec 



**MY COGNITIVE
HEALTH**

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An initiative of the
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