

# Wayman Chapel A. M. E. Church

## Healthy Initiative Newsletter

*October 2020*

### 5 Steps to Save Your Brain:

Advice for maintaining brain health with five practical lifestyle changes

### **Commit to a Healthy Brain Lifestyle**



Lifestyle begins with an attitude that declares, "I am committed to a life of healthy choices." You can become a champion of a proactive brain health lifestyle and actually serve as a role model to others, particularly your family and friends.

#### 1) Socialization

The first critical area to think about in order to promote a healthy brain lifestyle is the area of socialization. Research in humans indicates socialization is important to health and for reducing the risk of Dementia. It is important, therefore, to remain integrated in the community, to build a growing network of family and friends, and to always have a role and purpose for getting up each day. Retirement, as a national policy, does not make sense for a nation that prioritizes brain health for its citizens. Retirement promotes isolation and passivity, which reduces the likelihood of building brain reserve and drives a brain toward disease. Socialization is so vital to brain health.

#### 2) Physical Activity

Physical activity relates to brain health because 25 percent of the blood, oxygen and glucose from each heartbeat goes directly to the human brain. While the human brain weighs only two to four pounds on average, it demands more from each heartbeat than

any other part of the body! It truly is the "central" nervous system. Knowing this simple fact, you can better appreciate why physical activity promotes brain health. The human brain consumes such a high level of glucose, oxygen and blood because it cannot function without this energy source. Cells thrive from such blood flow and metabolize glucose for brain function, permitting rapid and efficient information processing. Even a brief period of slowed or no blood flow to a particular region of the brain can result in structural damage in the form of Stroke, and this leads to loss of such functions as movement, language and even personality change.

3) Mental Stimulation

We have learned that novel and complex environments help to activate the conscious information processing that promotes development of brain reserve. Our ability to engage our brain daily in the novel and complex fosters mental stimulation and promotes brain health. This includes new learning function. Environments that provide novel and complex stimuli are those most likely to be deemed "enriched," with the greatest likelihood of promoting brain reserve. Brain reserve refers to the development of increased brain function that helps to defend against or delay the onset of brain diseases such as Alzheimer Disease.

4) Spirituality

We all lead very busy lifestyles, and surely, like many others, you feel the high stress of a fast-paced environment. It's no wonder we're doing so much damage to our own health because of it. This area, which is referred to as spirituality, addresses the need for all of us to slow down, to introspect, and to reduce stress in our lives. By engaging in a slower and more reflective life, we can impact our health and brains in a positive way. Our own pace in life tends to be rapid and probably unhealthy. While most of us realize that we are going too fast and that we are involved in too many activities simultaneously, we have a hard time knowing how to slow down. The brain demands stimulation, but it also can function best when it has rhythm and symmetry. Our hectic pace raises the probability of mental chaos, stress, and reduced cognitive efficiency. It also can lead to emotional breakdown. A brain health environment supports time for oneself, time to slow down, and time to keep the brain energized.

5) Nutrition

Food has the ability to alter thought processes, mood and behavior. We also know that the human brain is 60 percent fat; brain is the fattest part of the body. It is believed that the lipid, or fatty, substance of the brain helps to insulate neural tracts, propelling information in a rapid and efficient manner. A brain that loses fat evinces slowed information processing, a maladaptive reality. As a result, we can propose specific foods that supplement omega-3 fatty acids good fat for the brain.

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*Inspiration...*

*"Never regret a day in your life. Good days bring you happiness and bad days give you experience."*

*--Unknown*