

# CUT YOUR RISK OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE!

There's good news and bad news about Alzheimer's disease, which affects more than 5 million Americans...current medications only minimally delay progression of the disease but evidence is piling up that you can lower your risk of Alzheimer's by making some simple changes in your life!

**SKIP THE CHIPS**: Eating too much fat and cholesterol seems to hasten the onset of Alzheimer's, at least in a recent mice study; in human studies, being obese in midlife raises the risk of later memory problems, dementia and Alzheimer's. The flip side: A 2006 study of more than 3,700 older adults found that those who ate plenty of vegetables slowed the decline of their mental abilities by 40%, compared with those who skimmed on their greens!

**TAKE A WALK IN THE SUN**: A study of nearly 2,000 people last year suggests that Vitamin D – “the sunshine vitamin”—could help keep your brain sharp. Among volunteers 65 years and older, those with the lowest levels of the vitamin were more than twice as likely to have cognitive impairment as those whose levels were optimal. Your skin makes vitamin D when it's exposed to sunlight, but because the process gets less efficient with age, some researchers also recommend supplements; Talk To Your Doctor.

**EXERCISE YOUR BRAIN**: Two recent studies found that people who had spent more years in school or had worked in mentally demanding jobs stayed sharper, even when their brains were damaged by the plaques and tangles of Alzheimer's disease. Lifelong hobbies such as playing cards or doing crossword puzzles might also help protect against the symptoms of Alzheimer's.

**MAKE TIME FOR FRIENDS**: A little chatting can have a big payoff: A Harvard study last year found that socially connected people kept more of their memory intact as they aged—up to twice as much, according to one measure!

**KEEP MOVING**: In a study of middle aged and elderly adults with mild memory problems, those who started walking several times each week scored significantly higher on memory tests after just six months.