

Focus ON Health

VOLUME ONE, ISSUE TWO, 2009

And Your Community Hospital

Improve Your Memory?
You Can Do It!

Preventing Lyme Disease When the Heat Is On
There's No Such Thing as a Healthy Tan

**North
Shore LIJ**

North Shore-Long Island Jewish Health System

Community Events at North Shore-LIJ

Visit the North Shore-LIJ Health System Web site and click on “News and Events” to access a comprehensive resource, complete with updates on the latest medical advances, health news, as well as compelling patient success stories.

Click on the “Community Events” tab for an extensive list of specific dates and events, which are continually updated. Women’s wellness, CPR training, and parenting sessions focusing on Lamaze and breastfeeding, are just some of the programs available.

Go to www.northshorelij.com and find out what will be going on in your area in the weeks and months ahead. You can also find the health system on Facebook — North Shore-LIJ Health System and on Twitter — NorthShoreLIJ.



North Shore-Long Island Jewish Health System



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Improve Your Memory?

You Can Do It!

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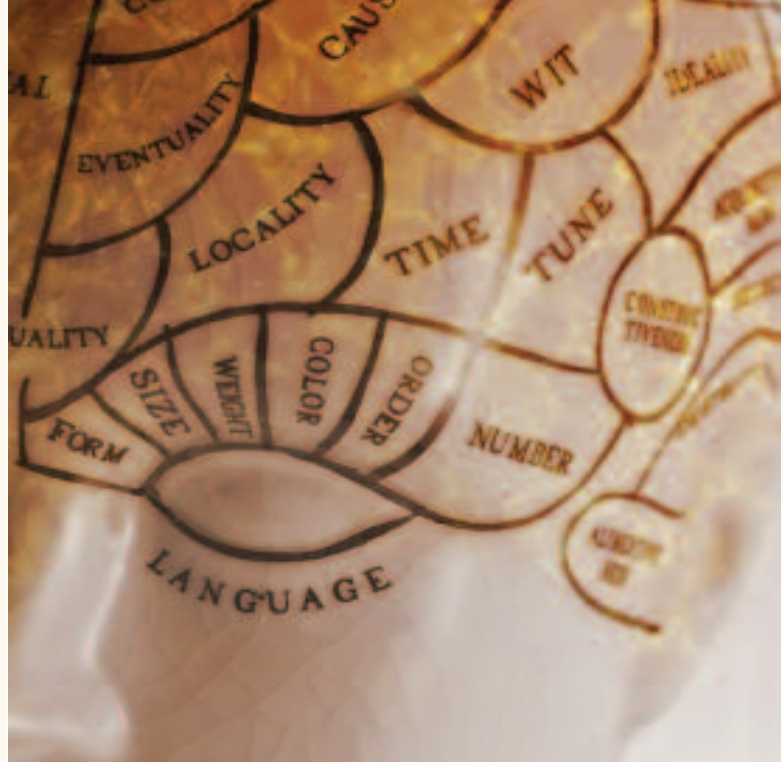


IMPROVE Your Memory? *You Can Do It!*

Is your memory in a state of rebellion, now that you're past 40? Have you misplaced your keys again? Is the name of that great movie you saw last week escaping you? Do you climb all the way upstairs and then forget why?

You're not alone. Experts say such lapses are normal. And researchers are finding that the foods we eat, the pills we take, and how we rest have a big impact — which means there are things we can do to help improve our memory.

Participating in certain activities, such as reading magazines or books, crafting, or playing an instrument, in middle age or later, may delay or prevent memory loss, according to a study released in February.



The study involved nearly 200 people between 70 and 89 with mild cognitive impairment or diagnosed memory loss, and more than 1,100 people in the same age bracket with no memory problems. It revealed that during later years, reading, playing games, using the computer and creating crafts decreased the risk of developing memory loss by 30 to 50 percent compared to people who did not participate in those activities. People who watched television fewer than seven hours a day were 50 percent less likely to develop memory loss than those who watched more than seven hours a day. Furthermore, people who socialized and read during middle age were about 40 percent less likely to develop memory loss than those who did not. Here are some other important things that can improve your memory:

Check your iron

Iron is a nutrient that helps neurotransmitters (essential to memory) to function better. A poor diet can cause iron levels to drop enough to affect your recall abilities, even if you don't have anemia.

Control your cholesterol

A healthy cholesterol level is as essential for mental acuity as it is for cardiovascular efficiency. Cholesterol buildup can hinder circulation to the brain, depriving it of essential nutrients, negatively affecting memory.

Do one thing at a time

Multitasking is overrated. It greatly reduces learning and information retention. So pay undivided attention to whatever you really want to remember.

Rejuvenate your mind

Meditation not only reduces stress, but it can also sharpen your memory. In one study, subjects who took a late-afternoon test after meditating for 40 minutes scored significantly better than those who napped for the same period. Meditation, like sleep, reduces sensory input, and this quiet state may provide a time for neurons to process and solidify new information and memories.

Double-check your medications

Taking many prescription and over-the-counter drugs can increase memory lapses. As you age, medicine tends to stay in your system longer, increasing the likelihood of interactions. Talking with your doctor about adjusting your dose or switching medications can be a simple solution.

Eat apples

Apples contain the right amount of antioxidants to raise levels of acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter that's essential to memory.

Exercise your heart

A good cardiovascular workout can keep your memory sharp by improving many aspects of brain functions. In a test of older, healthy volunteers, the group that did aerobic training three times a week actually increased their brains' volume and white matter, which contributes to attention and memory processing. Taking a one-hour walk at a brisk, slightly breathless pace three times a week will likely confer the same benefits.

North Shore-LIJ's Feinstein Institute for Medical Research is home to the nationally renowned Litwin-Zucker Center for the Study of Alzheimer's Disease. To find out more, please call 516-562-3492.

Quick Tips for Remembering Names

Franklin Roosevelt used to amaze his staff by remembering the names of nearly everyone he met. His secret? He would imagine seeing the name written across the person's forehead. Some other techniques:

1. Pay attention when you're introduced to someone. Focus on the person you're meeting.
2. Listen carefully and repeat the name immediately and then one or two more times following the introduction. Verbal repetition helps reinforce a new name in your memory.
3. Think of someone with the same or a similar name: a relative, friend, coworker, etc. Associate this person with your new acquaintance.
4. Form an immediate association with the name and the person's outstanding feature or trait. Hair color, tone of voice, style of clothing or even height are all effective associations.
5. As the conversation continues, continue to occasionally use the person's name. Example: "I couldn't agree with you more, Joe."
6. If you forget a name or didn't hear it the first time, don't fake it. Rather, say, "I'm sorry, but please tell me your name again."
7. If you're speaking to someone new over the phone, jot down the name on a piece of paper to make sure you don't forget the name.
8. When your conversation ends, whether on the telephone or in person, jot down the name and enough information about the individual to jog your memory later.

Preventing Lyme Disease When the Heat Is On

Ticks are at the top of their game in the warmer months, so the chance of contracting Lyme disease from a deer-tick bite increases dramatically.

The Lyme disease bacterium can infect several parts of the body, producing different symptoms at different times. The first sign of infection is usually a circular rash that occurs in approximately 70 to 80 percent of infected persons and begins at the site of a tick bite after three to 30 days.

Patients also may develop additional lesions and experience fatigue, chills, fever, headache, muscle and joint aches and swollen lymph nodes. Untreated, the infection may spread to other parts of the body within a few days to weeks, producing an array of symptoms.

Most cases of Lyme disease can be cured with antibiotics, especially if treatment is begun early. The key, of course, is to prevent being bitten by a tick in the first place.

Avoid areas with lots of ticks Stay away from wooded and bushy areas with high grass and a lot of leaf litter, which is where ticks often live. If you enter an overgrown area, walk in the center of the trail to avoid contact with grass, brush and leaf litter.

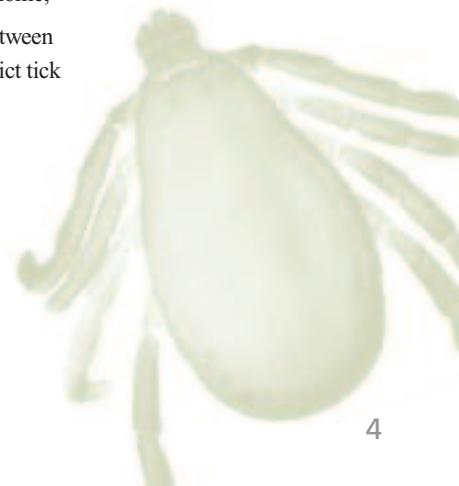
Keep ticks off your skin Use insect repellent with 20 to 30 percent DEET on exposed skin and clothing to prevent tick bites. Find effective repellents in drug and grocery stores. Permethrin, another type of repellent, is available at outdoor equipment stores that carry camping or hunting gear. Wear long pants, long sleeves, and long socks to keep ticks off your skin. Light-colored clothing will help you spot ticks more easily.

Check your skin and clothes every day Inspect clothing, especially under collars and cuffs, and remove ticks from your clothes before going indoors. To kill ticks you may have missed, wash your clothes with hot water and dry them using high heat for at least one hour. Inspect all parts of your body carefully including your armpits, scalp, ears and groin.

Remove ticks from your skin Remove ticks immediately using fine-tipped tweezers. Firmly grasp the tick very close to your skin and, with a steady motion, pull the tick's body away from your skin. If possible, drop the tick in a container filled with rubbing alcohol so it can be tested. Then clean your skin with soap and warm water. If a tick is attached to your skin for less than 24 hours, the chance of Lyme disease infection is extremely small. Never burn the tick with a match or coat it with petroleum jelly.

Create a tick-safe zone Use landscaping techniques to create a tick-safe zone around homes, parks, and recreational areas. Ticks that transmit Lyme disease thrive in humid wooded areas and die quickly in sunny, dry environments. Help reduce tick populations by:

- mowing the lawn frequently, removing leaf litter and clearing tall grasses and brush around your home;
- placing wood chips or gravel between lawns and wooded areas to restrict tick migration to recreational areas;
- keeping the ground under bird feeders clean;
- stacking wood neatly in dry areas; and
- keeping playground equipment, decks and patios away from yard edges and trees.





There's No Such Thing as a Healthy Tan

Vitamin D – the Sunshine Vitamin

Having enough vitamin D is important because it helps the body absorb calcium, which helps form and maintain strong bones. Recent research also suggests vitamin D may provide protection from osteoporosis, high blood pressure, cancer and several autoimmune diseases.

People with vitamin D deficiencies are prone to such diseases as rickets, which cause skeletal deformities in children, and osteomalacia, which causes weak muscles and bones in adults.

While vitamin D is found in fish, eggs, fortified milk, and cod liver oil, the sun also contributes significantly to the daily production of vitamin D. In fact, just 10 minutes of sun exposure is thought to be enough to prevent vitamin D deficiencies. Because of the harmful effects of the ultraviolet light, however, people should not be exposed to the sun without adequate protection.

For individuals at risk for vitamin D deficiency — such as the elderly and people who are homebound or dark-skinned — the best way to maintain a healthy level of vitamin D is in a balanced diet that includes enough vitamin D-rich foods, such as salmon and fortified milk. Vitamin D supplements can help too.

Summer time means fun in the sun — especially on Long Island, where there is easy access to beaches, boating, parks, golf courses and tennis courts. But there is a dark side to the sun: Overexposure can cause skin cancer. In short, there is no such thing as a healthy tan.

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency, the sun causes about 90 percent of nonmelanoma skin cancers and 65 percent of melanomas. More than 1.2 million new cases of skin cancer are diagnosed each year in the US. Melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, kills one person every hour.

Therefore, along with other sun safety strategies, it's important to protect yourself with sunscreens that absorb or block ultraviolet radiation (UV). Here are some key tips for staying healthy in the sun:

- Everyone over the age of six months should use sunscreen daily year-round, in any weather. (Infants should be kept out of the sun or protected with clothing and an umbrella or stroller hood.)
- Experts also recommend seeking the shade, especially from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and covering up with clothing, including a broad-brimmed hat and UV-blocking sunglasses.
- Sunscreen should not be neglected on overcast days, as 70 to 80 percent of the sun's rays — above all, long-spectrum UVA rays — penetrate clouds and fog.
- Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going outside and reapply at least every two hours, and immediately after swimming or heavy sweating.
- The Skin Cancer Foundation considers SPF of 15 or higher acceptable ultraviolet B (UVB) protection. Tests have shown that SPF 15 sunscreens filter out 93 percent of UVB rays, while SPF 30 protects against 97 percent and SPF 50 protects against 98 percent.
- Such sunscreens also provide some protection against ultraviolet A (UVA) wavelengths, which also contribute to aging and skin cancer. No FDA-approved measurement standard exists yet for UVA protection in the US.
- Moisturizers, tinted foundation, lipstick and other cosmetics containing an SPF 15 sunscreen provide as much protection as sunscreen used alone. But the same rules for reapplication apply.



Yes, Delicious AND Nutritious Cookouts

It's the perfect time of year to get outside and enjoy a healthy cookout with family and friends. But whether it's a beach picnic or a backyard celebration, traditional cookout fare — burgers, fried chicken, potato salad — is high in fat and calories. With some simple recipe substitutions you can still host a cookout with food that is delicious and healthy.

Burgers Make white-meat ground-turkey burgers (not higher-fat dark meat) for the same cookout feel and taste of beef burgers but with less fat. Add a little egg to keep the ground turkey moist, boost flavor by adding diced onion, fresh herbs and spices before grilling and serve with lettuce and tomato. A whole-grain bun also adds fiber and flavor and is healthier than buns made of “enriched” white flour.

Chicken Fried chicken is full of added fat and calories. This year, marinate and grill chicken instead. Or coat the chicken in whole-grain breadcrumbs and bake it in the oven for the crunch of fried chicken — without the added calories and fat.

Fruit and Veggies Don't forget to provide fresh snacks and side dishes, too, like grilled vegetables (corn, zucchini, and eggplant) and crunchy carrot and celery sticks, as well as watermelon chunks, plums, strawberries and blueberries. These are the best choices for your health — so lose the high-fat, packaged snacks, like potato chips.

Beverages Finally, fill a large jug with water, ice, and sliced citrus or cucumber. Drinking plenty of water, rather than calorie-filled beer and soda, is the optimum way to stay hydrated, especially when the temperature soars.



Healthy Recipe: Grilled Mahi-Mahi Tacos (Serves four)

Mahi-mahi, the Hawaiian name for Dorado, is a white fish that has a sweet and mellow flavor. The flaky but firm flesh makes a great taco filling when grilled and combined with mango-avocado salsa. An excellent source of protein, mahi also contains potassium, omega-3 fatty acids, and selenium, an antioxidant thought to have cancer-protecting qualities. The American Heart Association recommends eating fish at least twice a week.

Ingredients for salsa

- 1 large organic mango, diced
- 1 organic tomato, diced
- ½ cup chopped red bell pepper
- ¼ cup minced red onion
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro
- 1 ½ tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 large organic avocado, diced

Preparation

Combine first seven ingredients in large bowl, cover and chill for 30 minutes. Prior to serving, stir in diced avocado.

Ingredients for fish

- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ⅛ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon dried oregano
- ⅛ teaspoon garlic powder
- ⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 4 (4-ounce) mahi-mahi fillets, or substitute with any other white, flaky fish
- 12 7-inch corn tortillas, warm on grill

Preparation

Combine first six ingredients, rub fillets, and simply grill over a medium to high flame for three minutes per side and break into small chunks. Fill each warm tortilla with the spicy mahi chunks and top with mango-avocado salsa. Serve immediately.



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Focus on Health is published by the Public Relations
Department of the North Shore-LIJ Health System
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The information within this publication is intended to educate
readers about subjects pertinent to their health and is not meant
to be a substitute for consultation with a personal physician.

Designed, written and produced by: Onward Publishing, Inc.,
Northport, NY

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Health IQ



Deep Vein Thrombosis: Stretch Those Legs!

If you're taking a vacation that requires long-distance driving or flying, you should know about a condition called **deep vein thrombosis (DVT)**. DVT occurs when individuals are seated too long, often with legs crossed, especially in slightly lower pressurized plane cabins. These conditions can cause blood clots to form in legs. This is serious because a blood clot can break loose and travel to your lungs, causing a pulmonary embolism, which can be fatal. DVT can occur without any pain. Preventing DVT is far easier than treating it. Precautionary measures include:

- Exercise your calf muscles periodically if you'll be sitting a long time. When possible, get up and walk around.
- Walk down the aisle of a plane once an hour, drink plenty of nonalcoholic fluids and avoid crossing your legs.
- Make lifestyle changes. Obesity, smoking and high blood pressure all increase the risk of DVT.

Red Wine. . . Only in Moderation

Many scientists now believe that red wine in moderation might be healthy for your heart. While doctors agree that something in red wine appears to help the heart, it's unclear what that "something" might be. Researchers think antioxidants, such as flavonoids, or a substance called resveratrol, have promising heart-healthy benefits like increasing levels of "good" cholesterol, lowering inflammation and protecting against artery damage. Remember that doctors are wary of encouraging anyone to start drinking alcohol just for these benefits, since too much is harmful and can be addictive. Some studies have shown that red wine is no more helpful to the heart than other forms of alcohol. More research is needed before we know for sure.

Be Part of the Conversation! Follow North Shore-LIJ on Facebook and Twitter!

You can receive up-to-the-minute health care news and information when you follow the **North Shore-LIJ Health System on Facebook and Twitter.** There you'll get the latest health-related news, press releases, information about free health screenings, education offerings in the community, plus a host of wellness and other important information. In addition, you'll be able to lend your voice to the health care discussion by asking questions and offering your insights. On Facebook, search for North Shore-LIJ Health System. And find us on Twitter at twitter.com/NorthShoreLIJ. Be part of the conversation!

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