

The 20 Most Preventable Causes of

BRAIN DECLINE



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Founder of The Art of Anti-Aging
Host of *The Age-Defying Secrets Summit*

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The Most Powerful Healthy Aging & Longevity Steps You Aren't Hearing About

In *The Age-Defying Secrets Summit*, you are about to discover the proven most effective yet largely *unknown* natural steps you must take to look and feel your best, avoid and overcome disease, and live long and well.

Each of the 21 interviews truly holds the potential to change your life, so you don't want to miss a moment of this once-in-a-lifetime online event!

And to start things off, in this important new report, you're about to discover key ways to protect your brain health from declining as you age, and how to prevent neurodegenerative disorders.

Please DO share this useful report with loved ones!



"You need and deserve to know the most effective steps you can take to ward off disease and live long and well. The problem is, for so many of us these essential steps are generally unknown.

That's why you truly don't want to miss The Age-Defying Secrets Summit. In it, 21 top healthy aging and longevity MDs and researchers will each reveal the most effective yet little-known steps you must take to live long and well. Plus, it's hosted by my good friend and veteran natural health researcher, Brian Vaszily, who has a gift for bringing the best out of those he interviews — and who has a knack for making things fun as well as life-changing!"

DAVID PERLMUTTER, MD

Board-Certified Neurologist, 6-Time NY Times Bestselling Author

HOW DO YOU REALLY FEEL ABOUT THE FOLLOWING?

Hello, Brian Vaszily here, founder of The Art of Anti-Aging, where over 700,000 people in their “middle years” and “golden years” have signed up for our healthy aging insider insights. I’m also your host for *The Age-Defying Secrets Summit: The Most Powerful Healthy Aging & Longevity Steps You Aren’t Hearing About*, and a health researcher and bestselling author who others have called a “leading voice” in the natural health world for over 20 years.

And before diving into this special report, please see how you feel about the following...

Here at The Art of Anti-Aging, the “anti” means **we’re against all the destructive lies about getting older** out there that equate hitting your 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s and beyond, with becoming increasingly undesirable, incapable, doomed to suffering and disease, and “over the hill.”

We’re **against all the toxic “solutions” and toxic thinking** so often pushed on people by the Big Cosmetic, Big Food, and Big Pharmaceutical industries, who so often play upon those destructive aging lies and manipulate people through fear.

Instead, we are certain that when you take the right steps, your “middle years” and “golden years” will truly be your best years.

And **we are 100% committed to providing you with the proven most effective health and wellness steps** to achieve that... to look your best, feel amazing, avoid and overcome disease, and live a long life doing it.

If our mission sounds worthwhile to you, welcome to our positive and supportive community. 😊



BRIAN VASZILY, FOUNDER

CLARITY ON WHAT WILL MAKE THE BIGGEST IMPACT ON YOUR HEALTH AND LIFE

There's an overwhelming amount of health info out there in online events, blogs, articles, and more. And it all presents **two very big problems** that frustrate and even mislead many people.

One, so much of it is not evidence-based from sources you can trust.

Two, it causes serious confusion, because people are unclear on what steps to invest their precious time and energy in that will actually make the fastest and most powerful difference in their health and life.

That's why *The Age-Defying Secrets Summit* truly may be THE most life-changing and possibly even life-saving event you ever experience.

You see, in *The Age-Defying Secrets Summit*, I'm getting straight to the heart of the matter for you. That's because I'm gathering 21 of today's most renowned healthy aging and longevity doctors and researchers, each from different areas of expertise. And I'm challenging them each to reveal their answers to this one MISSION-CRITICAL question for you:

"From your specific area of expertise, what are 3 to 5 things that almost no one knows about – but that everyone needs and deserves to know – because of how powerfully it can help them look and feel their best, avoid and possibly even overcome disease, and live long doing it?"

Yes, that means you're getting TOTAL CLARITY on only the most important and effective secrets that will make the most difference in your health and life.

True, you don't yet know from which of the 21 top doctors and researchers the insights will come that lead to the biggest breakthroughs for you in particular...

However, considering these world-renowned experts are each revealing only their proven most powerful secrets, you can be **certain** those life-changing insights WILL come. That is why **you truly do not want to miss a moment** of this unique summit. If you miss even a single expert, after all, you may well miss that one crucial gem that makes ALL the difference for you. Therefore...

[Head here now to sign up for the FREE online *The Age-Defying Secrets Summit: The Most Powerful Healthy Aging & Longevity Steps You Aren't Hearing About* if you aren't signed up already and...](#)

[Head here to get the COMPLETE recordings and written transcripts of the entire summit](#) if you don't feel you'll be able to hear all 7 days of this essential event when it airs live, and to experience it all on your own schedule when and where YOU choose.

With that noted, the summit actually starts NOW, with this useful new report....



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THE 20 MOST PREVENTABLE CAUSES OF BRAIN DECLINE

It could well be argued that your brain is the most important organ in your body.

Not only does it serve as command central, telling your nerves, muscles, etc. what to do, it also enables thought, memory, and emotion. Without it, you would have no sense of identity or ability to build relationships and connect with other human beings.

This hugely critical role the brain plays in everyday life is what makes brain decline so incredibly painful.

At its worst, brain impairment is not just forgetting where you left your car keys. It's losing a lifetime of memories and even your own self (or someone you love).

That's why doing everything you can to protect the health of your brain as you age is vital because, unfortunately, brain decline is an increasingly common problem in our modern world.





THE RISE OF DEMENTIA & OTHER FORMS OF BRAIN DECLINE

Dementia has rapidly become a household word, and there's no longer any assurance that you'll be able to live on into old age with your mind intact.

Just a quick look at some basic statistics on dementia and its projected growth in the years to come gives you a clear picture of the huge scale of the problem:

- ▶ As of 2022, over 55 million people are estimated to be living with dementia worldwide with nearly 10 million new cases every year. ⁽¹⁾
- ▶ With this rapid rate of growth, the number of people living with dementia is expected to double in just 20 years. ⁽²⁾
- ▶ Worldwide, a new case of dementia occurs about every 3.2 seconds. ⁽²⁾
- ▶ In the U.S., an estimated 1 in 9 adults aged 65 or older has Alzheimer's dementia as of a 2022 report. ⁽³⁾
- ▶ In 2019, the estimated global cost of dementia was \$1.3 trillion, and this cost is expected to rise to \$2.8 trillion by 2030. The mental and emotional cost for those affected is incalculable. ⁽¹⁾
- ▶ Dementia is currently the seventh leading cause of death worldwide and a major cause of disability or dependency among older adults. ⁽¹⁾

As you can see, the rise of dementia is truly a crisis and one that is projected to get worse, not better. And those statistics don't even take into account the impact of other neurodegenerative disorders, like Parkinson's.

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT THERE ARE STEPS YOU CAN PERSONALLY TAKE TO CUT YOUR RISK FOR THESE DISEASES, BUT FIRST LET'S TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT WHAT BRAIN DECLINE IS AND HOW IT CAN AFFECT YOUR LIFE.



WHAT IS BRAIN DECLINE? THE **IMPACT OF DEMENTIA & OTHER BRAIN DISORDERS**

We are living in the midst of a brain health crisis that is impacting the entire world.

Brain decline is a very broad term that refers to a loss of cognitive function in some way. Of course, it could happen to a young person following an injury or severe illness, but most often brain decline is an age-related disorder.

The current face of significant brain decline in the U.S. and other countries around the world is dementia.

Dementia is a term that refers to cognitive impairment as the result of a disease or injury. The most common type of dementia is Alzheimer's disease, which accounts for about 60-70% of all dementia cases. ⁽¹⁾

Other types of dementia include vascular dementia, Lewy body dementia, and frontotemporal dementia.

There's also a pre-dementia stage known as mild cognitive impairment (MCI) where brain decline is more than can be attributed to age but not yet severe enough to affect your ability to carry out everyday tasks.

And though there are various stages and forms of dementia, the signs and symptoms are often very similar and include:

- ▶ General loss of memory or focus.
- ▶ Getting lost in familiar places.
- ▶ Forgetting recent events or people's names.
- ▶ Losing track of time.
- ▶ Becoming confused while at home.
- ▶ Losing or misplacing things frequently.
- ▶ Repetitive questioning.
- ▶ Trouble communicating/finding the right words.
- ▶ Planning and organization struggles.
- ▶ Personality changes.

It goes without saying that these are symptoms no one wants to experience as they get older.

BUT CAN YOU REALLY DO ANYTHING ABOUT PREVENTING BRAIN DECLINE?



KEEPING BRAIN DECLINE FROM BECOMING THE NEW NORMAL

First, the bad news: There are some factors involved in brain decline and dementia that are beyond your control.

Age is one such factor with over 90% of dementia cases diagnosed among adults aged 65 or older. Genetics also play a role, although researchers are still unsure to what extent.

But (and it's an important "but") there are many factors of brain decline that are within your control, allowing you to drastically cut your risk for dementia and other neurodegenerative disorders.

Or as the World Health Organization puts it, dementia is not "an inevitable consequence of biological aging."⁽¹⁾

In fact, research is increasingly showing that lifestyle has an enormous impact on brain health. What you put into your body— even the emotions and thoughts you let in— can contribute to cognitive decline in unsuspected ways, accelerating loss of brain function.

This means that simply by reducing or eliminating specific foods, products, habits, etc., you can start protecting your brain in a significant way and keep it sharper for longer.

SO, WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, HERE ARE THE TOP 20 MOST PREVENTABLE CAUSES OF BRAIN DECLINE AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT THEM— STARTING TODAY.

FOODS & FOOD GROUPS THAT ARE HURTING YOUR BRAIN

SUGAR-LADEN FOODS & DRINKS

If you needed yet another reason to avoid foods and drinks high in added sugar, here it is: They are bad for your brain.

To be clear, your brain does need glucose (aka sugar) to use as fuel for important cellular activities. But the amount of sugar consumed in the average modern diet far surpasses what your brain needs and quickly becomes harmful rather than helpful.

Research has shown that a high-sugar diet puts you at a greater risk of developing type 2 diabetes, which in turn is a risk factor for Alzheimer's disease. At least one study has also found that higher glucose levels may be a risk factor for dementia independently of diabetes. ⁽⁴⁾⁽⁵⁾

If that wasn't bad enough, other studies have revealed links between high sugar diets and memory impairment, less plasticity of the hippocampus, and brain inflammation. ⁽⁶⁾⁽⁷⁾



PROTECT YOUR BRAIN

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends a maximum intake of 25 g of free sugar (added sugars) per day, but you can easily get more than this amount in just one can of soda, a milkshake, or a serving of candy. ⁽⁶⁾

Limit these sugar-added treats as much as possible and read the label carefully to determine how much sugar you're actually consuming. Also, opt for smoothies over fruit juice because the fiber in smoothies will help to keep your blood sugar from spiking.



HIGHLY PROCESSED FOODS— ESPECIALLY PROCESSED MEAT

Like every other organ in your body, your brain relies on the nutrients you provide it to function properly. And nutrients are exactly what most highly processed foods are lacking.

Foods like chips, cookies, candy, microwave meals, and instant noodles tend to be high on added sugar, sodium, and fat but have had most of their nutrient content destroyed during processing.

The result is that a diet high in processed foods (i.e., the standard Western diet) is linked to obesity as well as microstructural brain tissue damage and a higher risk of Alzheimer's disease. ⁽⁸⁾⁽⁹⁾

The list of highly processed foods to avoid could take up this entire report, but there's one group to highlight as far as brain health goes: processed meats.

Now, it is highly recommended to avoid or at least reduce all animal products – and this *especially* goes for processed meats (and fish with mercury).

Many types of processed meat (bacon, salami, sausage, etc.) are preserved with nitrates, which have been associated with specific psychiatric disorders and changes in the gut microbiome in studies. ⁽¹⁰⁾

Eating processed meats regularly has also been linked to lower memory scores, inflammation, and accelerated cognitive decline. ⁽¹¹⁾⁽¹²⁾

PROTECT YOUR BRAIN

Fill your diet with whole foods as much as possible and consider cooking from scratch several times a week if you don't already. Particularly avoid processed foods high in sugar and sodium as well as processed meat. If you do eat processed meat, at least look for nitrate-free options.

REFINED CARBOHYDRATES

Refined carbohydrates can be thought of as a sub-category of highly processed foods, but they are worth highlighting because the standard Western diet is full of them— and they are bad news for your brain.

Examples of refined carbs include anything made from white flour (bread, pasta, pastries, etc.) as well as white rice.

Essentially, these refined foods have had all the “good stuff” taken out of them. They are missing the fiber that is critical for

healthy digestion and that helps sugar to be absorbed more slowly into your body as well as important nutrients found in the bran of grains (which is removed during processing).

Not only does this refining process take away nutrients your body needs, it also gives these foods a higher glycemic load, meaning they are likely to raise your blood sugar levels quickly.

This is not good for the health of your brain because studies have shown that meals with a high glycemic load can impair memory. Some research has even found that a diet high in refined carbohydrates may damage various brain systems over time. ⁽¹³⁾⁽¹⁴⁾



PROTECT YOUR BRAIN

Choose whole grains over refined grains as much as possible. Or replace some of your refined carbs with vegetables, fruits, and legumes.

FRIED FOODS & OTHER SOURCES OF TRANS FAT

Partially hydrogenated oils were banned in the U.S. in 2018 because they were a source of artificial trans fats that were linked to heart disease, inflammation, and higher cholesterol levels.

This was good news for brain health, too, because consumption of trans fats is also connected to neurodegenerative effects like Alzheimer’s disease, poorer memory, lower brain volume, and cognitive decline. ⁽¹⁵⁾⁽¹⁶⁾

Unfortunately, this ban doesn’t mean you’re in the clear as far as trans fats go because they can still show up in other foods— much to the detriment of your brain (and heart). The main source of artificial trans fats to steer clear of is fried foods (including French fries, donuts, and battered/fried meats).



Though these foods don't start out containing trans fat, the high heat used during frying causes trans fats to form in the cooking oil, which end up on the food you eat. Reusing the same oil for frying (as happens in many restaurants) creates even more trans fats.⁽¹⁷⁾

Vegetable shortening, non-dairy creamers, and canned frosting manufactured before 2018 (in the U.S.) likely also contain high levels of trans fats. Meat and dairy contain natural trans fats that have not yet been studied for their health effects.

PROTECT YOUR BRAIN

Avoid or cut back on fried foods and limit how often you cook food in vegetable oil at high heat (this also produces trans fats). Focus instead on a diet high in omega-3 fatty acids, which have protective properties for your brain.⁽¹⁸⁾

ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS

Artificial sweeteners are often marketed as a healthier, lower calorie alternative to sugar, but they are anything but healthy.

Studies link them to increased calorie consumption and changes to the gut microbiome and suggest that they contribute to both metabolic syndrome and obesity— two health issues people are led to believe artificial sweeteners can combat (as compared to sugar).⁽¹⁹⁾

The news doesn't get any better when it comes to brain health.

Some research has already found a possible connection between consuming artificially sweetened beverages and a greater risk of stroke and dementia. Aspartame, in particular, is made up of chemicals that can cross the blood-brain barrier and disrupt neurotransmitter production.⁽²⁰⁾⁽²¹⁾

In addition, one study found that consuming large amounts of aspartame (commonly found in sugar-free products) daily led to a higher rate of depression, more irritability, and poorer mental performance in participants.⁽²²⁾



PROTECT YOUR BRAIN

Move away from using artificial sweeteners and also avoid sugar-free foods unless you can verify that they do not contain artificial sweeteners. Whole leaf stevia (not the highly processed extract) can be a good sugar substitute, or you can work at training your brain to do without heavily sweetened foods.

ALCOHOL



Most people don't want to hear that alcohol can affect brain health long-term, but the truth of the matter is that it can be one of the most destructive substances for your mind.

However, there's some positive news here if you like to have an occasional drink to unwind: Drinking alcohol in moderation is not connected to the same negative brain effects as heavy drinking.

For those who are heavy drinkers, chronic alcohol use can result in multiple cognitive effects, including a reduction in brain volume and a disruption of neurotransmitters. Alcoholism can

also cause a vitamin B1 deficiency, which may lead to severe brain damage. ⁽²³⁾⁽²⁴⁾

Keep in mind that heavy drinking can mean binge drinking as well as daily drinking. Going "overboard" on weekends can be just as detrimental for your brain (and health) as drinking heavily every day of the week.

Interestingly, according to a study from the British Medical Journal, while having more than 14 drinks a week can put you at a higher risk of dementia, regularly drinking less than this amount did not come with the same risk. ⁽²⁵⁾

PROTECT YOUR BRAIN

Generally, guidelines suggest that men should drink fewer than 14 drinks per week (no more than 4 a day) and women fewer than 7 drinks per week (no more than 3 a day). The greatest health benefits seem to come from limiting alcohol intake to 1 glass (preferably of wine) per day. ⁽²⁶⁾

EXCESS OMEGA-6 FATTY ACIDS (ESPECIALLY FROM CERTAIN VEGETABLE OILS)

While omega-3 fatty acids have been linked to protective effects for the brain (plus many other health benefits), overconsuming omega-6 fatty acids can be harmful for your mind.

Again, this isn't a question of whether you should consume foods with omega-6 or not because a certain amount of this specific fatty acid is beneficial for brain function.

The point is that the standard Western diet is typically overloaded with omega-6 fatty acids, which is what starts to impact your brain (much like overdoing it on glucose/sugar).

The key to protecting brain and whole-body health is to consume omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids in a ratio of about 4:1 or 3:1. Unfortunately, the average ratio in the standard American diet is 20:1, meaning an incredible excess of omega-6.

Research has discovered that there is an association between this type of diet that is skewed high in omega-6 fatty acids and a greater risk of dementia, particularly Alzheimer's disease. ⁽²⁷⁾

Other studies have confirmed these findings, including one that found (on the positive side) that a healthy balance of omega-6 and omega-3 coincided with more robust brain structures and better memory preservation.

But as the researchers noted, the Western diet tends to be imbalanced in favor of higher amounts of omega-6 fatty acids, which may instead contribute to cognitive decline. ⁽²⁸⁾

PROTECT YOUR BRAIN

Avoid or cut back on vegetable oils like safflower oil, corn oil, soybean oil, sunflower oil, and canola oil, which are all high on omega-6 fatty acids. Add in more fish like salmon and sardines (if you eat meat) or an algae supplement to boost your omega-3 intake. Flax seeds, chia seeds, hemp seeds, and walnuts all have a great omega-6 to omega-3 ratio.



FISH CONTAINING MERCURY



Fish can be one of the healthiest meal options for meat eaters, but not if you're eating fish contaminated with mercury.

Mercury is a heavy metal that is incredibly toxic to the brain. It has all kinds of negative effects on your central nervous system, including the disruption of neurotransmitters and the stimulation of neurotoxins, and can cause significant brain damage. ⁽²⁹⁾

Ingesting mercury is even more problematic because it accumulates in and damages your gut, kidneys, and liver. It's particularly destructive for developing fetuses and young children but harms everyone to some degree. ⁽²⁹⁾

The biggest problem with mercury (apart from its harmful effects) is that it's a worldwide contaminant and environmentally persistent.

In the form of methylmercury, it easily accumulates in the tissues of fish and other sea animals and can contribute to brain decline in those who commonly consume seafood. ⁽³⁰⁾

PROTECT YOUR BRAIN

Not all fish are equally likely to be contaminated with mercury. Larger, longer-lived predatory fish typically contain the highest amounts, so you may wish to avoid or cut down on eating shark, swordfish, albacore tuna, marlin, king mackerel, tilefish from the Gulf of Mexico, and northern pike.

Fish like haddock, whiting, catfish, trout, light tuna, and salmon generally have little to no mercury contamination as do other seafood options like oysters, scallops, and shrimp.

NEUROTOXINS IN COMMON PRODUCTS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO BRAIN DECLINE

A neurotoxin is any substance that damages your central nervous system, which includes your brain and spinal cord. And while you might expect to find neurotoxins only in bottles labeled with a skull and crossbones, they are actually present in many everyday products.

Mercury is a prime example of a neurotoxin that we've already discussed in the previous section. Unfortunately, there are many more toxic chemicals and metals you need to be aware of for the sake of protecting brain health, particularly the following...

LEAD IN OLD PAINT

Lead is one of the most well-known and toxic heavy metal contaminants. No level of lead in the body is considered safe, and it can be especially detrimental for children and their developing brains.

Exposure to high levels of lead can lead to severe health problems and even death, but low-level exposure is also a significant problem.

To give you just a brief overview, lead exposure can contribute to kidney disease, heart disease, high blood pressure, fertility issues, and cancer. It can cross over the placental barrier and damage a developing baby's nervous system or cause miscarriage. ⁽³¹⁾

Lead is also one of the worst neurotoxins.

It looks similar to calcium on the molecular level, which gives it an ability to "trick" your body into letting it cross the blood-brain barrier. Lead-induced damage in the brain can lead to multiple neurological disorders and possibly raises Alzheimer's risk. ⁽³²⁾

Another unfortunate aspect of lead is that it gets stored in your bones, blood, and tissues. This means it can be released long after your initial exposure to damage or destroy brain cells. ⁽³¹⁾



PROTECT YOUR BRAIN

One of the most common sources of lead is old paint. If you live in a house built in 1978 or earlier, it's worth getting a test done to determine if lead is present in your home. Herbs and supplements can also be contaminated with lead, so look for brands that are routinely tested for purity. Lead may also be present in plastic, including children's toys.

ARSENIC, CADMIUM, & LEAD IN DRINKING WATER



As the Flint water crisis showed, there's no guarantee that the water coming out of your tap is clean and pure.

In fact, there are multiple toxic substances that could be lurking in your drinking water, though heavy metals are of top concern as far as brain health goes.

Lead, which we just discussed as a dangerous neurotoxin, can leach into water from lead pipes and plumbing fixtures. It can be present in high amounts— like in Flint, Michigan— or smaller amounts that accumulate in your body over time. ⁽³³⁾

Arsenic is another toxic heavy metal that you might associate with murder mysteries, not your water source.

However, the presence of arsenic in drinking water is a worldwide problem, and a 2021 report from the Environmental Working Group (EWG) documented arsenic in the drinking water of all 50 U.S. states. ⁽³⁴⁾

This is hugely problematic because arsenic is a known carcinogen, contributes to heart disease, and is a potent neurotoxin, particularly for the developing brain. ⁽³⁴⁾⁽³⁵⁾

Cadmium is yet another heavy metal that can (and does) leach into drinking water. It can harm just about every organ in the human body, including the brain, and is also a carcinogen. ⁽³⁶⁾⁽³⁷⁾

PROTECT YOUR BRAIN

If you haven't already, get your water tested to find out if there are any toxins or heavy metals present. Also, consider using a reverse osmosis filtration system, which is one of the best for removing heavy metals. They now make countertop versions, so you don't have to hook up your whole home.

"FOREVER CHEMICALS" IN NONSTICK COOKWARE

A whole generation has now grown up without the annoyance of food sticking to the pan, all because of nonstick cookware.

Unfortunately, this seemingly brilliant invention is also one of the most toxic that could very well be taking years from your life and harming your brain in the process.

The main problem with nonstick cookware is that it's made from a group of chemicals known as Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS). These specific chemicals have been



nicknamed “forever chemicals” because of how long they persist in the environment and in the human body.

Even worse, PFAS are linked to a host of health problems.

One specific PFAS chemical known as perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) was so toxic that it was subject to a global ban in 2019 due to links to cancer, thyroid disease, and hormone disruption. ⁽³⁸⁾

Because of this, PFOA was phased out of nonstick cookware but only to be replaced by other PFAS chemicals.

This is alarming because forever chemicals have proven to accumulate in the human body (and specifically in your brain), even with “minor” exposure. Recent research has also shown that PFAS are “associated with chronic and age-related psychiatric illnesses and neurodegenerative diseases,” including Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s. ⁽³⁹⁾

PROTECT YOUR BRAIN

Throw out all your nonstick cookware (and utensils) in favor of cast iron, stainless steel, or ceramic. BUT see the next section for why you shouldn’t replace nonstick with aluminum.

ALUMINUM IN POTS & PANS (& OTHER PRODUCTS)



Aluminum is a metal that can have very toxic effects on the human body. It’s found in many everyday products (cans, pots, pans, foil, etc.) in supposedly safe amounts, but few studies have researched the effects of chronic low-grade exposure.

What research has shown is that aluminum exposure can lead to lung, kidney, stomach, and nervous system issues as well as bone and brain diseases. ⁽⁴⁰⁾

Researchers have also recently established links between aluminum, neurological disruption, and neurotoxicity. ⁽⁴¹⁾

Nothing is conclusively proven yet, but studies do show that “normal” aluminum exposure may be associated with a greater risk of Alzheimer’s, stroke, and numerous other age-related diseases. ⁽⁴²⁾

Of course, there’s also a potential link between aluminum and breast cancer, which is yet another reason to limit your exposure to this metal. ⁽⁴²⁾

PROTECT YOUR BRAIN

If you currently cook with aluminum pots or pans, which react with both heat and acid to leach particles into food, switch over to stainless steel, ceramic, or cast iron.

Also, be aware that aluminum is present in some foods, particularly self-rising flour products, and canned goods. Again, it's present in supposedly safe levels, but you be the judge.

FLAME RETARDANT CHEMICALS IN FURNITURE, BEDDING, ELECTRONICS, ETC.

Flame retardant chemicals have been used in the U.S. since the 1970s to prevent or slow fire from catching on household items.

These chemicals can be present in many places within your home but are most commonly found in the following:

- ▶ Mattresses
- ▶ Electronic devices
- ▶ Foam pillows
- ▶ Household appliances
- ▶ Furniture and upholstery
- ▶ Wires and cables
- ▶ Carpets
- ▶ Construction materials, particularly foam and insulation



Unfortunately, though fire prevention is a noble goal, there are multiple toxic chemicals found in conventional flame retardants. Some have proven to have such ill health effects that certain types of flame retardants have already been pulled from the market. ⁽⁴³⁾

Some of the most problematic chemicals still potentially present in flame retardants are polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs).

PBDEs easily release from products into the air of your home as volatile fumes or toxic dust. They are linked to neurological and developmental defects and neurotoxic effects as well as thyroid disruption and cancer. ⁽⁴⁴⁾

Multiple other flame retardant chemicals are also linked to health problems like hormone disruption, reproductive toxicity, cancer, and neurological harm. ⁽⁴³⁾

To put it simply, you do not want to be breathing these chemicals every day— for the sake of your brain and entire body.

PROTECT YOUR BRAIN

It's difficult to avoid chemical flame retardants entirely, but you can cut down on your exposure by looking for furniture and bedding with the label "Contains No Added Flame Retardants". Also, avoid products with polyurethane foam, which is typically heavy on flame retardant chemicals.

Finally, vacuum regularly with a HEPA filter vacuum to get rid of chemicals that accumulate in dust and/or use a HEPA air purifier.



NICOTINE & CADMIUM IN TOBACCO PRODUCTS (PLUS HEAVY METALS IN VAPING PRODUCTS)

Smoking is one of the worst habits for brain health (not to mention lung health).

The very ingredient that makes smoking enjoyable and addictive— nicotine— has shown neurotoxic effects in studies that is especially damaging to the infant and adolescent brain but nevertheless harmful at all stages of life. ⁽⁴⁵⁾

In addition, tobacco products can contain heavy metals like cadmium that further contribute to brain decline. ⁽⁴⁶⁾

Overall, researchers have concluded that there are strong links between smoking and accelerated cognitive decline, increased risk of dementia, loss of brain volume, and increased risk of stroke. ⁽⁴⁷⁾⁽⁴⁸⁾⁽⁴⁹⁾

Vaping or e-cigarettes are proving to be no better for your brain than traditional tobacco products and in some instances may be even worse.

Studies have found that e-cigarettes frequently contain heavy metals like lead, arsenic, cadmium, aluminum, and chromium that all act as neurotoxins and harm your lungs. Some brands also contain nicotine and/or artificial sweeteners. ⁽⁵⁰⁾⁽⁵¹⁾

PROTECT YOUR BRAIN

Quitting nicotine, tobacco products, and vaping products is the best move to protect the health of your brain. Studies have found that smokers who quit for a prolonged period of time do experience a reduced risk of dementia and positive brain changes, so it's not too late to stop smoking! ⁽⁵²⁾

NUMEROUS CHEMICALS IN COSMETICS & PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS

In the U.S., the cosmetics and skincare industry is highly unregulated, despite the fact that these types of products are designed to be applied to your skin where chemicals have the potential to be absorbed into your bloodstream.

In fact, over 1600 chemicals are currently banned from cosmetics products in the European Union (EU) over health concerns, but only 11 of these chemicals are restricted in the U.S. ⁽⁵³⁾



This means that you can be applying any number of toxic chemicals to your body every day that act as hormone disruptors, carcinogens, reproductive toxins, allergens, and—of course— neurotoxins. ⁽⁵⁴⁾

It's impossible to list all of the chemicals and ingredients you should watch out for in personal care products, but here are some of the top “heavy hitters” that can be detrimental to your brain:

FRAGRANCE

The word fragrance on the label of any product means there could be any number of unlisted chemicals present in that product. There are over 3000 possible fragrance chemicals (many of which are petroleum-derived), including phthalates, synthetic musks, and chloromethane, which are all toxic to your brain and nervous system. ⁽⁵⁵⁾⁽⁵⁶⁾

TOLUENE

Toluene is a chemical used to make spray paints, explosives, and glues but is also commonly found in nail polish and hair dye. It is a confirmed neurotoxin and high levels of exposure may lead to neurodegenerative disorders, including dementia. ⁽⁵⁷⁾

PFAS

Yes, the same forever chemicals that are present in nonstick cookware can also show up in cosmetics. They are most likely to be present in water resistant makeup, including foundation and makeup. ⁽⁵⁸⁾

PHTHALATES

Phthalates are now linked to neurotoxicity in children and implicated in the rising numbers of children's neurodevelopmental disorders. This means there's a strong likelihood they may affect your brain past childhood as well. They can show up in many products like shampoo, soap, and moisturizers as well as hide within fragrance. ⁽⁵⁹⁾⁽⁶⁰⁾

PROTECT YOUR BRAIN

Become a label reader to make sure that you are buying products that are as clean as possible (the EWG can be a great resource for cleaning up your personal care products). The gold standard for avoiding toxins is buying USDA Certified Organic cosmetics and skincare, so look for this option as often as possible.

OTHER HABITS & TOXINS THAT CAN DAMAGE BRAIN HEALTH

MOLD AND MYCOTOXINS IN YOUR HOME



Exposure to mold and mycotoxins (toxins produced by certain types of molds/fungi) frequently happens without your awareness, but it can be devastating for the health of your brain and body.

Mold is most commonly present in old, water-damaged buildings, but it can grow in any humid and poorly ventilated space.

This means that it might be lurking in your basement, bathroom, or another area of your home, releasing spores that you unknowingly breathe in.

Not only is breathing in mold bad for your lungs, it can also “fire up” your immune system and cause a chronic allergic reaction in those who are sensitive. Even worse, it acts as a neurotoxin and can cause neurologic and neuropsychiatric symptoms. ⁽⁶¹⁾

Mycotoxins have similar effects and are usually found alongside mold in buildings, although they can also be present in certain foods that pick up invisible fungi going from the field to your cupboard.

Foods that are most likely to contain mycotoxins include coffee, grains, fruit, nuts, and spices. ⁽⁶²⁾

PROTECT YOUR BRAIN

Strongly consider getting your home tested for mold, particularly if it's an older home and/or you've been experiencing allergy-like symptoms that don't go away and seem to have no origin.

Foods with mycotoxins (grains, nuts, fruit) will often show signs of mold or discoloration, so inspect them before eating and try not to store them for long periods of time. Coffee beans can contain mycotoxins even without signs of mold, but you can look for a brand that tests for their presence. ⁽⁶²⁾

PESTICIDE RESIDUE ON FOOD (AND IN PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS)

The manufacturers of conventional pesticides would like us to believe that they are harmless to our health, but evidence is mounting that this is far from the truth.

In the U.S. alone, over 1 billion pounds of chemical pesticides are applied every year, and their use is increasingly linked to health issues like cancer, gastrointestinal disorders, reproductive toxicity, hormone disruption, and respiratory problems. ⁽⁶³⁾

And make no mistake— these pesticides can and do frequently make their way to the food you eat, and even washing and peeling produce before eating it can't completely remove the residue. ⁽⁶³⁾⁽⁶⁴⁾

Certain pesticides are of special concern because of their neurotoxic effects.

At the top of the list are specific insecticides that are made specifically to target the nervous system of insects. Research is now showing that these targeted effects may also impact the human brain, particularly when it's developing. ⁽⁶⁵⁾

Organophosphates, including chlorpyrifos, are especially concerning because they are linked to neurodevelopmental toxicity and possibly associated with an increased risk for dementia (plus, they were originally developed for chemical warfare). ⁽⁶³⁾

Other pesticides with neurotoxic effects include carbamates, pyrethroids, ethylenebisdithiocarbamates, and chlorophenoxy herbicides. ⁽⁶⁵⁾

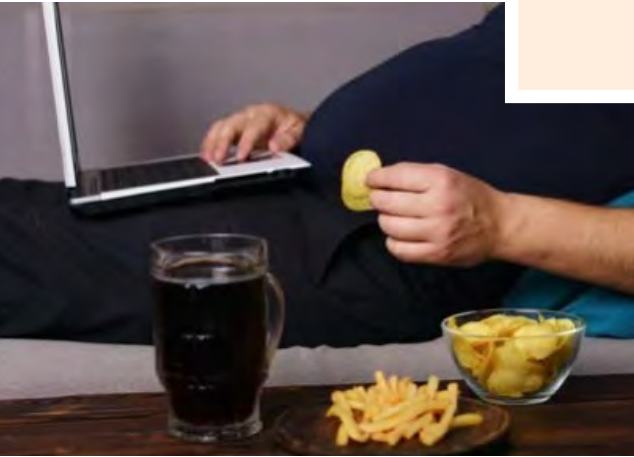
PROTECT YOUR BRAIN

Buy organic food as much as possible, particularly produce that falls into the "Dirty Dozen" category: strawberries, spinach, kale, collards, and mustard greens, nectarines, apples, grapes, bell and hot peppers, cherries, peaches, pears, celery, and tomatoes. ⁽⁶⁴⁾

Also, be aware that any product made with plant-based ingredients, including skincare products, can contain pesticide residue, so look for organic options when possible.



A SEDENTARY LIFESTYLE (AND A “SEDENTARY” BRAIN)



Leading a sedentary lifestyle (i.e., little to no physical activity and lots of sitting) is not good for any aspect of your health.

In fact, numerous studies have linked it to adverse health outcomes like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and osteoporosis as well as an increased risk of heart disease, cancer, metabolic diseases (including diabetes), and all-cause mortality. ⁽⁶⁶⁾

If that's not reason enough to become more physically active, recent research has shown that sedentary living can be just as detrimental to your brain.

As a prime example, researchers from UCLA found a link between sedentary habits and the thinning of regions of the brain involved in memory formation. Other studies have also discovered a possible connection between lack of exercise and cognitive impairment. ⁽⁶⁷⁾⁽⁶⁶⁾

On the other hand, moderate levels of exercise are linked to better cognition in older adults and increased brain metabolism, which could help to lower your risk of Alzheimer's disease. ⁽⁶⁸⁾⁽⁶⁹⁾

PROTECT YOUR BRAIN

Getting 150 minutes of exercise each week is the recommended minimum amount for good health. Keep in mind that it doesn't have to be strenuous exercise (walking is an excellent form of exercise, for example). Just get your body moving.

Interestingly, there's reason to believe that keeping your brain— not just your body— active is also essential for maintaining cognitive function. (A case of “use it or lose it”.)

Some research indicates that activities like learning a new skill or participating in creative arts are particularly good for memory and brain function, but any way you can keep your brain active will help protect it down the road! ⁽⁷⁰⁾⁽⁷¹⁾

NOT GETTING ENOUGH QUALITY SLEEP

Sleep is essential for every part of your body and especially for your brain. It's when your body does its deepest repair work and even removes toxins from your brain that build up while you're awake. ⁽⁷²⁾

In fact, specific stages of sleep are connected to different brain structures and functions, including memory, emotion, and skill learning. ⁽⁷³⁾

As you can imagine, sleep deprivation can have a tremendous negative impact on cognitive function.

In the short term, it impairs cognitive function and can make it difficult to concentrate and remember things. In the long term, sleep deprivation may cause structural changes in the brain and lead to the accumulation of β -amyloid, which is implicated in Alzheimer's disease. ⁽⁷⁴⁾⁽⁷⁵⁾

Certain sleep problems, like sleep apnea, are especially harmful to brain health and put you at a greater risk of high blood pressure, stroke, and memory loss. ⁽⁷⁶⁾



PROTECT YOUR BRAIN

To keep your mind sharp as you age, make sleep a priority! Experts still recommend 7-9 hours of sleep each night for both young and older adults, so make it your routine to get to bed on time.

If you have trouble falling asleep at night, try changing your habits to see if sleep quality improves. For example, make sure your bedroom is a restful, peaceful place. Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and blue light exposure late in the day. Also, try calming remedies like chamomile, essential oils, and music to help you drift off.

CHRONIC STRESS

Stress may be an unavoidable part of life, but going through life constantly stressed is detrimental to your brain and mental health.

Even short-term stressful events have an impact on your brain, resulting in changes to structure and specific brain mechanisms. And when stress does not fade but becomes chronic, research has shown that more permanent changes can take place, like smaller gray matter volume. ⁽⁷⁷⁾⁽⁷⁸⁾

These structural changes particularly impact the parts of your



brain connected to memory, cognition, decision making, and mood and may put you at a greater risk of developing Alzheimer’s disease or a mental health disorder, like depression. ⁽⁷⁹⁾⁽⁸⁰⁾

Of course, chronic stress negatively affects other parts of your life as well— like sleep quality and eating habits— that further contribute to brain decline in a “snowball effect”.

PROTECT YOUR BRAIN

Consider which (if any) stressors in your life you can control. Are you too busy? Do you need more time with friends/family? Do you watch the news all the time and get stressed by what you hear?

For stressors outside your control, do what you can to help yourself manage them better, whether that’s practicing meditation, getting regular exercise, going to counseling/talk therapy, or learning breathwork and relaxation techniques.

Finally, though any type of stressor can be hard on your health, you should especially beware of the effects of unresolved anger. It can contribute greatly to chronic stress, and studies indicate that it physically changes your brain, impairs cognitive processing, and may raise your blood pressure. ⁽⁸¹⁾

KEEP YOUR **MIND SHARP** BY ELIMINATING RISK FACTORS FOR BRAIN DECLINE

As you can see, there are numerous risk factors for brain decline that are highly preventable and well within your ability to reduce or eliminate.

Tackling as many of these risk factors as you can will help to protect healthy brain function and slash your risk of neurodegenerative disorders like dementia.

In fact, one study found that participants who adhered to four out of five healthy habits— not smoking, regular physical activity, high-quality diet, light to moderate alcohol consumption, and cognitive activities— had a 60% lower risk of Alzheimer’s than those who didn’t. ⁽⁸²⁾

That should be all the encouragement you need to take a look at your lifestyle habits, the food you put into your body, and the products in your home to cut out as many causes of brain decline as you can and keep your mind sharper for longer.



NOW, GET READY FOR THE MOST LIFE-CHANGING HEALTH SECRETS OF ALL...

So again, here at The Art of Anti-Aging, the “anti” means we’re against all the destructive lies about **getting older** out there that equate hitting your 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s and beyond with becoming increasingly undesirable, incapable, doomed to suffering and disease, and “over the hill.”

We’re **against all the toxic “solutions” and toxic thinking** being pushed on people by certain powers-that-be who so often play upon those destructive aging lies and manipulate people through fear and even “convenience.”

Instead, we are certain that when you take the right steps, your “middle years” and “golden years” will truly be your best years.

And we are **100% committed to providing you the proven most effective health and wellness steps** to achieve that... to look your best, feel amazing, avoid and overcome disease, and live a long life doing it.

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