



MY BRAIN HEALTH PLAN



Hosted & supported by
Alzheimer Scotland

Many factors can affect the health of your brain as you go through life. Some of these things you can't control, but others you can influence by making positive lifestyle changes.

At Brain Health Scotland, we want to empower you to stay healthy and reduce the risk of diseases that can lead to dementia.

This guide will highlight key areas that you can address. Use it to help you take control and make your own personal brain health pledges.



Get started building your personalised plan by completing the online quiz at: **brainhealth.scot/brainhealthplan**



TAKE EXERCISE

Being physically active is one of the best things you can do to boost brain health. Regular exercise helps maintain a good blood supply to the brain, improves mental wellbeing and promotes good quality sleep.

There are lots of ways you can become more active. Whatever works for you, aim to complete at least **2-3 hours** of moderate intensity exercise every week.

What counts as 'moderate exercise'?

BRISK WALKING **GARDENING**
RIDING A BIKE **DANCING**



EAT WELL

Making good food choices can help ensure your brain gets the nutrients it needs.

Your diet is also vital for maintaining a healthy weight and avoiding conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes, which can affect brain health.

Research shows that following a Mediterranean-style diet benefits your brain. Rich in olive oil, it includes:

LOTS OF: vegetables, fruit, beans, fish and wholegrains.

NOT TOO MUCH: meat and sweet, sugary foods.



**Scan here &
Discover more**



STAY CONNECTED

Your brain thrives on company and benefits from the stimulation of you being with other people. We also know that if you continue to learn, and challenge yourself mentally throughout life, you can build your brain's resilience.

Picking up new skills and hobbies helps too. Be creative. Learning a language or a musical instrument is a great way to stay sharp.

Try a new activity in a group, or with a friend, to keep motivated while also getting that added social benefit.



REDUCE RISKS

Smoking causes damage to the blood vessels that supply the brain, interrupting the delivery of vital oxygen and nutrients.

Get help to stop smoking at quityourway.scot

Stopping smoking – even later on in life – can reduce the risk of developing dementia.



You don't need to avoid alcohol completely, but exceeding the recommended weekly limits can damage the brain and increase your risk.

Calculate your weekly units at count14.scot



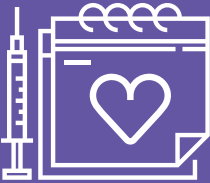
SWITCH OFF

Long-term stress can harm the brain and make it harder to keep on top of the other factors that are key to keeping our brains healthy. So make time for yourself, and the things that help you switch off and relax.

Take steps to protect your sleep. Your brain cleans itself while you sleep, flushing out waste products that build up throughout the day.

Aim for **7-9 hours** of good quality sleep every night. Not getting enough sleep can affect your memory and ability to think in the short and long term.

access practical advice and tips for improving your sleep routine. See thesleepcharity.org.uk



BE AWARE

Some medical conditions can have a knock-on effect on your brain's wellbeing.

Among them are those that affect blood supply, including diabetes, high blood pressure and atrial fibrillation.

Conditions that might leave us feeling socially isolated, such as hearing loss and depression, can have an impact too – as can a history of head injury.

Monitor your overall health with regular check-ups. Pick up on any concerns early, follow medical advice closely and take any medications as prescribed.



GET INSPIRATION AND PERSONALISED TOP TIPS BY COMPLETING THE ONLINE QUIZ:

www.brainhealth.scot/brainhealthplan



Note: this leaflet is designed to help individuals understand and maintain their own brain health. The information here does not replace any guidance given by other healthcare practitioners. If you have any concerns about changes in your memory or thinking abilities, then seek the advice of your GP.

GET STARTED

Make pledges that are realistic and measurable. Try setting your goals with someone else to help make them fun and keep you motivated. Sharing your pledges – and your progress – will help you succeed!

Fill in these pages with your own pledges to achieve better brain health. Cut them out and put them where you will see them. This will remind you what you want to achieve!

And always keep your pledges simple:

I WILL

improve my diet



HOW

by swapping meat for fish

WHEN

three times a week

WHERE

at home

WITH

my husband, John

PLEDGE

I WILL

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HOW

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WHEN

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WHERE

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WITH

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PLEDGE

I WILL

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Taking part in research is a great way to help increase understanding of brain health and disease. Volunteers are always needed – and not only people with a brain-related diagnosis.

There are plenty of ways to get involved. Sign up for a study today:

www.joindementiaresearch.nihr.ac.uk/

WHAT CAN TAKING PART IN A STUDY INVOLVE



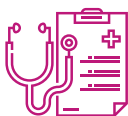
COGNITIVE TESTS



DRUG TRIALS



SCANS & IMAGING



QUESTIONNAIRES



ONLINE ACTIVITIES



GENETIC TESTS



LIFESTYLE CHANGES



PHYSICAL TESTS



TALKING THERAPIES

NOTES

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