

Wellness Wednesday



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6 Seemingly Harmless Habits That May Increase Your Risk Of Dementia

Dementia is a condition characterized by the loss of memory, language, problem-solving, and other cognitive abilities. It predominantly affects individuals aged 65 and older and is often caused by Alzheimer's disease. While certain factors like age, family history, and race cannot be controlled, there are lifestyle habits that may increase the risk of developing dementia. In this Wellness Wednesday, we will explore six seemingly harmless habits that could have an impact on your brain health and discuss ways to mitigate the risk.

1. Sedentary Lifestyle: A Detriment to Brain Health

Not moving your body enough or sitting for long periods of time can have detrimental effects on your brain health. Regular exercise, especially aerobic exercise, has been shown to reduce cognitive impairment and dementia risk. When you engage in physical activity, it improves blood flow to the brain, promotes the growth of new neurons, and enhances cognitive function.

According to Blair Steel, a psychologist at Carrara Treatment, Wellness & Spa, "Being inactive does a number on the brain." Just like any other muscle, if you don't use it, you lose it. Therefore, incorporating daily physical activity into your routine can significantly decrease your risk of dementia. Whether it's going for a walk, joining a fitness class, or participating in sports, finding an activity that you enjoy and can maintain long-term is key to reaping the brain health benefits.

2. The Importance of Social Engagement

Socializing is not just about having a good time; it also plays a crucial role in maintaining brain health. An active and socially integrated lifestyle can protect against the development of dementia. Engaging in social interactions stimulates the brain, enhances cognitive function, and provides a sense of connection and belonging.

In today's digital age, it's important to differentiate between social media interactions and in-person socializing. While social media can provide a sense of connection, it may not stimulate the brain in the same way as face-to-face interactions. Spending quality time with friends, family, and participating in community activities can have a profound impact on your brain health.

Poor social health can overstimulate the body's stress response, leading to increased levels of cortisol, elevated blood pressure, and decreased blood flow to vital organs. Therefore, prioritize socializing in person and make an effort to maintain strong social connections to reduce the risk of dementia.



3. The Sleep-Dementia Connection

Sleep disturbances and dementia are common health problems among older adults. Lack of sleep or poor sleep quality can increase the risk of developing dementia. It's essential to prioritize getting adequate and restful sleep to promote brain health.

Various factors can disrupt sleep, such as family obligations, work-related stress, or excessive use of electronic devices. Avoiding screens and bright lights before bedtime can help regulate your sleep-wake cycle. Establishing a relaxing nighttime routine, such as reading a book or practicing meditation, can signal to your body that it's time to wind down and prepare for sleep.

If you experience persistent sleep problems, it's important to seek medical advice. A healthcare professional can evaluate your sleep patterns, identify potential underlying causes, and recommend appropriate interventions to improve your sleep quality.

4. The Impact of Chronic Stress on Brain Health

Chronic stress can have significant implications for brain health and increase the risk of developing dementia. When you're stressed, the body releases cortisol, a stress hormone that, when elevated for prolonged periods, can lead to cognitive decline.

Reducing stress through healthy habits is crucial for mitigating the risk of dementia. Engaging in regular exercise, pursuing creative activities or hobbies, spending time with loved ones, practicing meditation, and engaging in activities that bring joy and relaxation can help manage and alleviate stress.

Flexibility in your reactions and avoiding a rigid mindset, commonly observed in older adults, can also contribute to reducing stress levels. Embracing a more adaptable approach to life's challenges can have positive effects on your overall well-being, including brain health.

5. Alcohol Consumption: Moderation is Key

Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to alcohol-related brain damage (ARBD), which impairs cognitive functions and daily tasks. To prevent this, it's important to drink alcohol in moderation, defined as up to 14 units per week for both men and women, and to avoid binge drinking. Seeking professional help and support is essential for those struggling with alcohol-related issues, as there are various resources and treatments available.

6. The Role of Diet in Dementia Prevention

A diet high in ultra-processed foods can increase the risk of dementia, while a well-balanced and nutritious diet can optimize brain health and reduce the chances of cognitive impairments. Foods rich in antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals like leafy greens, berries, whole grains, nuts, fish, and healthy fats promote brain health. On the other hand, red meat, sweets, cheese, butter, and fast or fried food should be limited as they may have adverse effects on cognitive function. Adopting a balanced and brain-healthy diet can significantly reduce the risk of dementia and promote overall well-being.

Final Thoughts

Lifestyle habits, including physical exercise, social interactions, quality sleep, stress management, moderate alcohol consumption, and a nutritious diet, can reduce the risk of dementia. Early detection and intervention are vital in managing the condition and improving quality of life. By prioritizing brain health and adopting healthy habits, you can take proactive steps towards reducing the risk of dementia and promoting well-being.



AIR FRYER BBQ CHICKEN TENDERS



INGREDIENTS

Equipment

- Air Fryer

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons favorite BBQ sauce
- olive oil spray
- 12 chicken tenderloins, 1 1/2 lbs total
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt and black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 1 large egg white
- 1/2 cup seasoned breadcrumbs
- 1/2 cup seasoned panko, plain or gluten-free
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne powder
- olive oil spray

WHY CHOOSE AIR FRYER BBQ CHICKEN TENDERS?

There are several reasons why these BBQ chicken tenders are a great choice for your next meal:

1. **Healthy:** Unlike traditional deep-fried chicken tenders, these air-fried versions are much lighter and require only a small amount of oil.
2. **Delicious:** With shortcut ingredients like BBQ sauce, seasoned breadcrumbs, and panko, these chicken tenders are packed with flavor.
3. **Kid-Friendly:** Skip the cayenne pepper for a milder version that the kids will love. Pair them with fries for a complete meal the whole family can enjoy.
4. **High Protein:** Each serving of these chicken tenders contains a whopping 43 grams of protein, making them a nutritious choice.

QUICK & EASY

Are you looking for a quick and easy chicken recipe that the whole family will love? Look no further than these crispy air-fried BBQ chicken tenders! Made with minimal oil and coated in a sweet and fiery BBQ sauce, these chicken tenders are sure to be a hit. Whether you serve them with corn on the cob or a big salad, they are guaranteed to satisfy your taste buds.

Nutrition Information

Serving: 3 pieces, Calories: 312 kcal, Carbohydrates: 17.5 g, Protein: 43 g, Fat: 6.5 g, Saturated Fat: 1.5 g, Cholesterol: 171 mg, Sodium: 751.5 mg, Fiber: 1 g, Sugar: 5 g



INSTRUCTIONS



HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Combine BBQ sauce in a small bowl with 1 1/2 to 2 tablespoons of water, to thin down.
2. Season chicken with salt, garlic powder and 1/8 teaspoon black pepper.
3. Combine egg and egg white in a medium bowl. In a shallow bowl, combine the bread crumbs, panko and cayenne pepper.
4. Dip chicken in the egg wash, then into the breadcrumb mixture and shake off excess and place on a large dish or cutting board. Spray both sides of the chicken generously with oil.
5. In batches, cook the chicken 400F 5 to 6 minutes on each side, turning halfway, until the chicken is cooked through and crispy and golden on the outside. Brush or drizzle chicken with sauce until fully coated. Serve right away.

VARIATIONS AND SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Feel free to customize this recipe to suit your preferences:

Chicken: If you can't find chicken tenders, you can use chicken breasts instead. Simply cut them into strips before proceeding with the recipe.

Homemade BBQ Sauce: Instead of using store-bought BBQ sauce, you can make your own at home for a personalized touch.

Adjust the Spice Level: Omit the cayenne powder if you prefer a milder version of these chicken tenders.

Alternative Breadcrumbs: If you don't have seasoned breadcrumbs or panko on hand, you can create your own coating by adding spices like garlic powder, onion powder, salt, and paprika to regular breadcrumbs.

FEATURED EXERCISE

https://www.self.com/gallery/yoga-poses-to-relieve-lower-back-pain?utm_source=nl&utm_brand=spotlight-nl&utm_campaign=aud-dev&utm_mailing=thematic_spotlight_111521_2&utm_medium=email&bxid=5bd67c6a3f92a41245df6228&cndid=46152576&hasha=939f74e0e38f2b23e4f29bf36c365d55&hashb=c28861495e4ab88752aee383fdd9afb3ec8c121&hashc=89afa46502b4b829409b24c0a03445a33af0d6df33e25fc2e64713b1df7d66&esrc=FYL_SEG_APR18&sourcecode=thematic_spotlight&utm_term=Thematic_Spotlight

Featured Exercise ► Thread the Needle

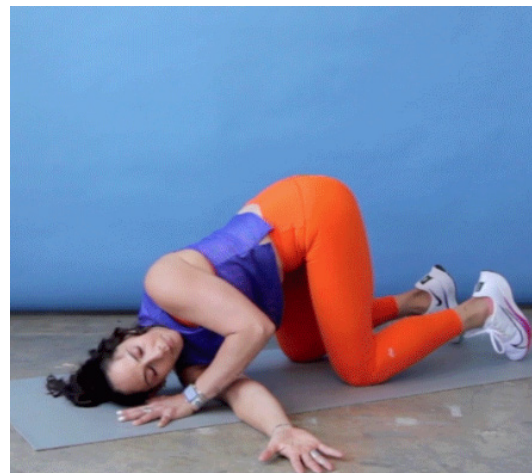


HOW TO DO IT:

1. Start in a tabletop position with your shoulders stacked directly over your wrists and hips over your knees.
2. Reach your right arm underneath your left and across your body with your palm facing up.
3. Bend your left elbow as you gently lean into your right side; you should feel a stretch in the back of your right shoulder.
4. Hold this pose for 1 minute and then repeat with the left arm.

BENEFITS:

One of the primary benefits of the thread-the-needle exercise is its ability to relieve neck pain and tension. If you find yourself feeling tight and tense in your neck, this stretch can provide much-needed relief. By slowly twisting your neck back and forth and applying gentle pressure with your bodyweight, you can work out any kinks or knots in your neck. Taking a minute or two to perform this stretch on each side can help alleviate discomfort and promote relaxation.



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Regular exercise can help you control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if it's been awhile since you've exercised and you have health issues or concerns, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.



Meet Ulliance Senior
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