Healthy Lifestyles May Help Cognitive Function Even Among People Late-life — as well as maintaining physical activity throughout the lifespan — lowers the risk of cognitive decline. According to a new study published in *Neurology*, up to 80% of people with Alzheimer’s also have significant vascular pathology in the brain. Public health programs can promote behaviors beneficial to the heart and brain. These heart-brain healthy habits include:

- **Exercise**: Regular physical activity can help maintain cognitive abilities and reduce the risk of cognitive decline.
- **Healthy Diet**: A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and grains can support brain health.
- **Stress Management**: Techniques such as meditation and deep breathing can help reduce stress levels.
- **Sleep**: Maintaining a consistent sleep schedule can improve cognitive function.
- **Social Interaction**: Engaging with friends and family can lower the risk of cognitive decline.
- **Cognitive Engagement**: Challenging activities like reading and puzzles can help keep the brain sharp.
- **Limit Alcohol Consumption**: Excessive alcohol use can harm the brain.
- **Stop Smoking**: Smoking is linked to memory loss and cognitive decline.

### Data Spotlight on the Heart-Brain Connection

Data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) sheds light on the connection between cardiovascular disease and cognitive decline. The BRFSS collected data from 45,000 adults aged 45 and older across the United States. The findings revealed:

- **No Cardiovascular Disease**: 8.9% of participants.
- **Cardiovascular Disease**: 11.1% of participants.

Adults with cardiovascular disease were found to be significantly more likely to have subjective cognitive decline (SCD) compared to those without it. This highlights the importance of addressing cardiovascular health to maintain cognitive function.

### Healthy Habits for Your Brain

The Alzheimer’s Association offers a guide to 10 healthy habits for brain health. These habits can be used together to promote brain health, address dementia and help keep the brain sharp. The guide is available in English and Spanish. Find all 10 habits, available in both languages, on the Alzheimer’s Association website.

- **Brain-Healthy Food**: Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, and whole-grain foods to support brain health.
- **Physical Activity**: Regular exercise can help maintain cognitive abilities.
- **Stress Management**: Techniques like mindfulness and deep breathing can reduce stress levels.
- **Sleep**: Maintain a consistent sleep schedule to support cognitive function.
- **Social Interaction**: Engage with friends and family to stay connected and active.
- **Cognitive Engagement**: Participate in mentally stimulating activities like reading and puzzles.
- **Limit Alcohol Consumption**: Excessive alcohol use can harm the brain.
- **Stop Smoking**: Smoking is linked to memory loss and cognitive decline.

### Community Health Improvement Planning — The HBI Road Map and MAPP 2.0

Community health improvement planning is an opportunity for local health departments and organizations to better address brain health, dementia and caregiving in their communities. The Alzheimer’s Association will introduce participants to a new guide, *Healthy Brain Initiative Road Map: Integrating Brain Health into Health Improvement Planning*, which is available as a digital tool. The tool allows users to compare data between states and counties, and examine trends in prevalence, costs, emergency department visits and hospitalization rates. Each can be used together to promote brain health, address dementia and help keep the brain sharp.

### Webinars and Upcoming Events

- **American Heart Month Webinars and Upcoming Events**
- **Research Roundup**
- **Taking Charge of Your Brain Health**
- **Data Spotlight on the Heart-Brain Connection**

The Alzheimer’s Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer’s care, support and research. Our mission is to lead the way to end Alzheimer’s and all types of dementia. For more information, visit us at alz.org. If you or someone you know has been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s or another form of dementia, call the Alzheimer’s Association 24/7 helpline at 1-800-272-3900. The Alzheimer’s Association is proud to serve our communities in English and Spanish.