Mindful Aging: Practical Tips for a Healthy Brain

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Learning Objectives

By the end of this talk, you will be able to:

- Understand the signs of normal cognitive aging
- Incorporate key elements of a healthy exercise routine
- Choose foods that can help delay cognitive decline
- Make changes to your routine to help you get better sleep
- Recognize why treatment of hearing loss and mood are helpful for your cognition
- Avoid medications that put you at higher risk

Normal cognitive aging

- Cognitive decline is a part of normal aging
- Begins in our 40s!
- Mildly slowed speed-of-processing
- Difficulty with "multi-tasking"
- Name-face recognition impairment
- Slowed retrieval of old information, and retrieval errors (e.g. actors names)
- A tendency to ramble





Cognitive Reserve



The pace and degree of this cognitive decline can vary



Many possible factors can affect it



But how can we slow it down?





Exercise



Move more throughout the day and sit less



At least 150 to 300 minutes weekly (spaced throughout the week) of at least moderate-intensity aerobic exercise



At least 2 days weekly of musclestrengthening exercises



Also add in flexibility and balance!



Exercise – common missteps



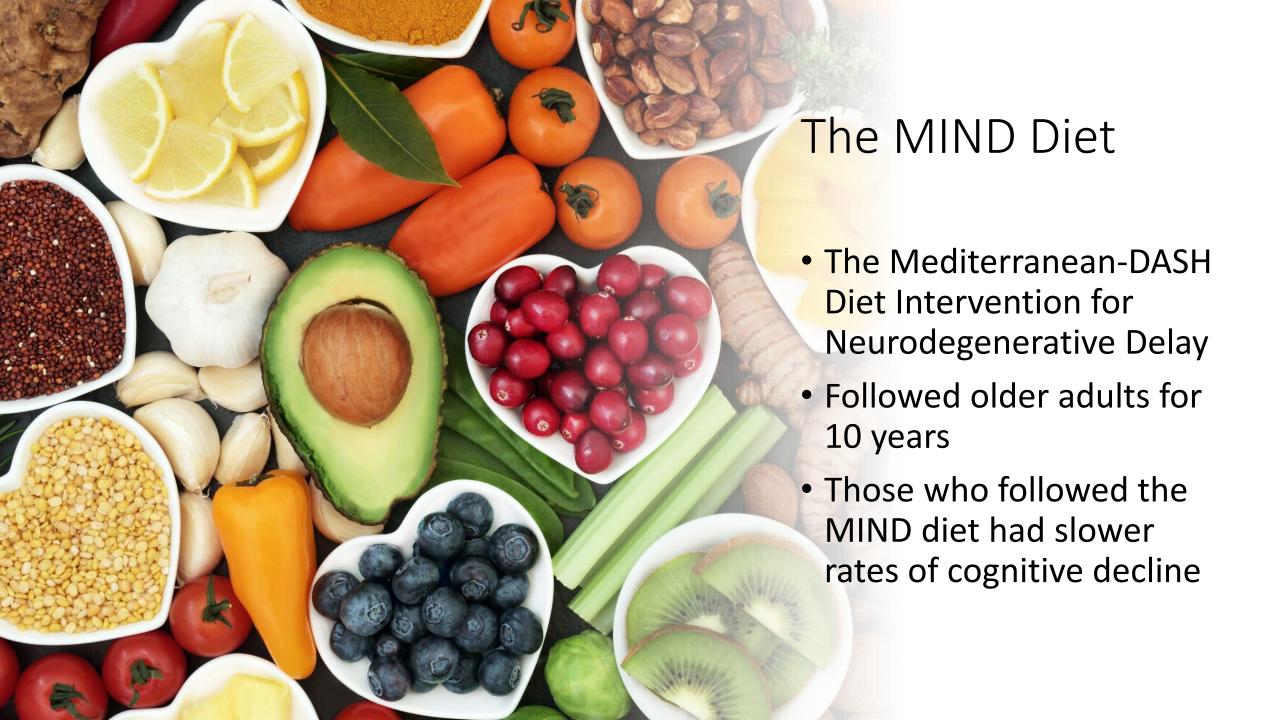
Not talking to your doctor before starting a new routine



Doing too much too soon



Not having a balanced routine





The MIND Diet

- Highlights plant-based foods and limits the intake of animal and high saturated fat foods
- Recommends specific "brain healthy" foods to include, and five unhealthy food items to limit

The MIND Diet – The Dos

3+ servings a day of whole grains

1+ servings a day of vegetables (other than green leafy)

6+ servings a week of green leafy vegetables

5+ servings a week of nuts

4+ meals a week of beans

2+ servings a week of berries

2+ meals a week of poultry

1+ meals a week of fish

Mainly olive oil if added fat is used



The MIND Diet – The Don'ts

- Fewer than 5 servings a week of pastries and sweets
- Fewer than 4 servings a week of red meat (including beef, pork, lamb, and products made from these meats)
- Less than one serving a week of cheese and fried foods
- Less than 1 tablespoon a day of butter/stick margarine

Hearing and cognitive decline



How does hearing loss contribute to cognitive decline?



Get your hearing tested regularly



Can take time to adjust to hearing aids!

Medical Conditions and Medications

- Keep conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart failure under good control
- Only take medications prescribed and recommended by your doctor
- Be careful of some over the counter medications! For example, diphenhydramine (Benadryl) can have significant effects on your cognition



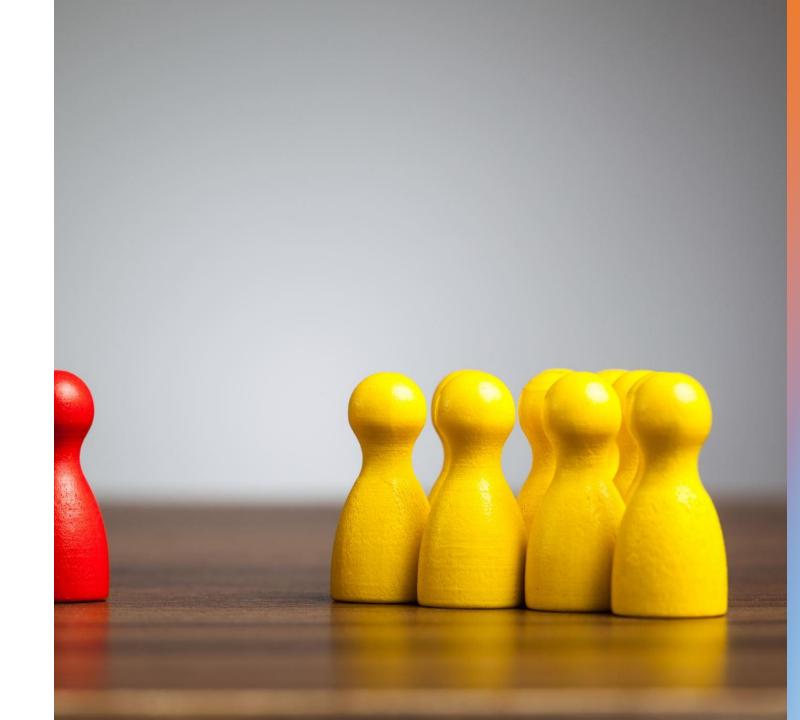


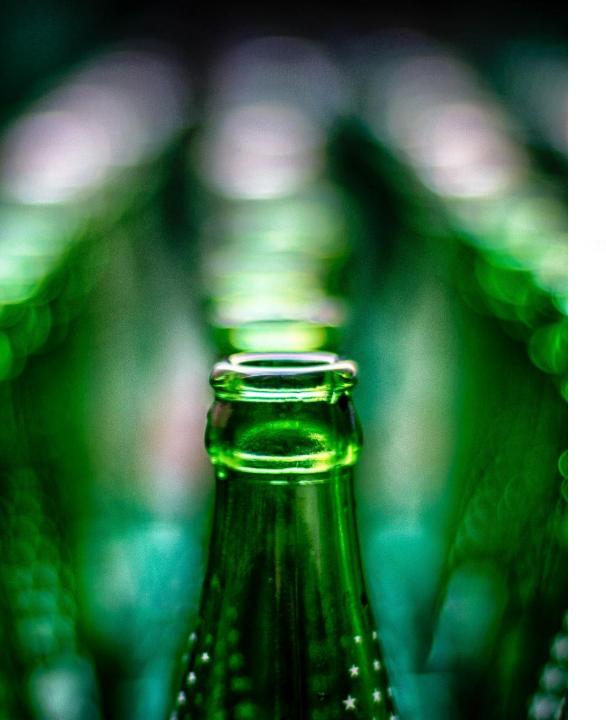
Sleep

- Be aware of symptoms of sleep apnea
- Avoid sleep medications as much as possible
- Stick to the same sleep schedule
- Exercise can be helpful for sleep
- Avoid eating and drinking for three hours before bed
- No caffeine after the morning

Mood

- Depression and anxiety affect attention
- Attention is key for cognitive processing!





Alcohol

- Heavy drinking (>3 drinks per day) is associated with increased risk of cognitive decline
- Mixed evidence for mild to moderate drinking
- However, alcohol definitely increases fall risk

