

HEALTHY OUTCOMES

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11 Best Bets for Brain Health

by Berkeley Wellness

Anyone who promises you guaranteed strategies or products to protect and preserve your mind and prevent dementia is either trying to sell you something or suffering from wishful thinking. Still, scientists all over the world have been working to solve the mysteries of the aging brain. One important thing they have learned is that what helps the cardiovascular system also seems to benefit the brain. Here's the latest thinking.

1. Exercise Your Body... Observational studies have consistently found that older people who get regular exercise are less likely to decline mentally and/or develop dementia. Aerobic exercise such as running or cycling seems especially beneficial,



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Midlife Risk Factors Boost Alzheimer's Risk

By Berkeley Wellness

Midlife cardiovascular risk factors greatly increase the risk of eventually developing amyloid plaques in the brain, which are a prominent feature of Alzheimer's disease.

This was seen in a study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, in which researchers followed 322 people (average age 52, without dementia initially) for more than 25 years, correlating their risk factors with amyloid deposition in their brains as seen at periodic exams. The risk factors were smoking, obesity, hypertension, diabetes, and high cholesterol (treated or untreated).

People who were obese at midlife were twice as likely to have elevated brain amyloid levels in later life, compared to those of normal weight. Having two or more risk factors nearly tripled the likelihood.

This goes along with other studies that have linked such midlife cardiovascular risk factors to Alzheimer's and other kinds of dementia. ■

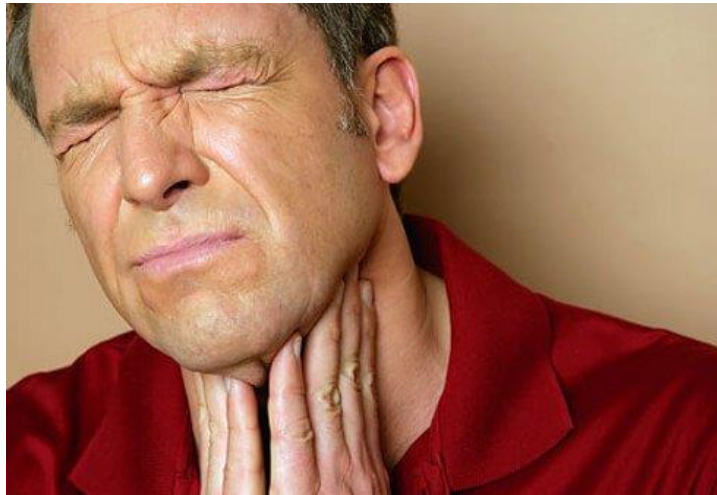
SORE THROAT: Causes & Treatments

by Berkeley Wellness

A sore throat, or acute pharyngitis, is one of the most common upper respiratory problems, and it ranks as one of the top reasons for visiting a doctor's office.

Sore throat is usually a symptom of an infection—typically viral but in some cases bacterial—or an irritation of the pharynx, the back column of the mouth behind the tongue.

Irritation may result from a local throat infection or from postnasal drip, which is often a symptom of sinusitis, colds, or various allergic reactions. Allergy-related sore throats are typically accompanied by itchy



eyes and a congested or runny nose.

What causes a sore throat?

Most sore throats are caused by a virus, primarily those associated with the common cold. Sore throats caused by a virus usually develop

gradually. They are often accompanied by a runny nose, congestion, irritation or redness of the eyes, coughing, or hoarseness. If a fever is present, it will generally be 101°F or below. The flu is a common viral infection accompanied by fever or chills, fatigue, muscle or body aches, loss of appetite, cough, and a sore throat.

A bacterial sore throat usually comes on faster, lymph glands in the neck often swell and become tender. Strep throat, or streptococcal infection, is the most common cause of bacterial throat infection, although less than 15 percent of all sore throats are caused by the *Streptococcus pyogenes* bacterium. Signs of strep throat include pain in the throat, a fever higher than 100.4°F, enlarged cervical lymph glands, white patches in the back of the throat, and no presence of a cough or irritation of the eyes.

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Did You Know... Alzheimer's disease is the sixth-leading cause of death in the United States.

BRUXISM

(Tooth Grinding): *Treatments and Prevention*

by Berkeley Wellness | February 2016

Do you grind or clench your teeth while you sleep? It's thought that at least one in ten adults do so regularly, and some also grind during the day. Unless your bedmate tells you, you may be unaware of it—until your dentist notices signs of ground-down teeth and tells you that you have bruxism (the technical term for tooth grinding). You may also become aware of the problem because of symptoms such as jaw pain, headaches, a clicking sound in your jaw, and sensitive teeth.

Bruxism can not only impair sleep quality and damage teeth, but in severe cases it can lead to TMJ (temporomandibular joint) disorders, painful conditions affecting the jaw and facial muscles. Over time, bruxism can also worsen periodontal disease.

There's still some disagreement about the probable causes—anatomical, psychological, neurological, or behavioral—of bruxism and about treatments. Emotional stress is one likely culprit. People who grind their teeth often report that they are experiencing stress or anger. Ironically, some antidepressants may promote, rather than prevent, bruxism.

Other known or possible contributing factors include a family history of bruxism, certain facial abnormalities, smoking, heavy drinking, and sleep apnea. People under 50 seem to have higher rates of nighttime bruxism than older people. Malocclusion (an uneven bite) may also increase the likelihood of bruxism.

Guarding against tooth grinding

Because bruxism can have many causes (or no identifiable cause), there is no single treatment. If you are under lots of stress, try relaxation techniques such as meditation or biofeedback or something as simple as a warm bath before bedtime. A cognitive behavioral therapist may be able to identify factors that increase your grinding and find strategies to counter them. If you drink alcohol, see if it helps to cut back or abstain, at least in the late evening.

The main treatment for bruxism is to wear a mouth guard (technically called an occlusal splint) during sleep. Your dentist can custom fit a device made of soft or hard acrylic. A guard won't prevent all grinding, but it can redistribute the forces exerted while grinding and thus help protect teeth. And it may help you get used to keeping your jaw unclenched, even during the day when you aren't wearing it. Custom-made night guards usually cost \$400 or more. If you get new crowns or there are other changes in your teeth, you may need to be fitted for a new mouth guard.

Inexpensive over-the-counter mouth guards (some marketed specifically for bruxism) are bulkier than dentist-made guards, won't fit as well for most people, and are likelier to cause problems, such as sores and altered bite. Discuss such devices with your dentist before using one.

Any mouth guard must be kept clean on a daily basis—you can use toothpaste, mouthwash, or even denture cleaner. ■



A Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns about Falls



Have you turned down a chance to go out with family or friends because you were concerned about falling? Have you cut down on a favorite activity because you might fall? If so, **A Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns About Falls** is a program for you.

Fear of falling can be just as dangerous as falling itself. People who develop this fear often limit their activities, which can result in severe physical weakness, making the risk of falling even greater. Many older adults also experience increased isolation and depression when they limit their interactions with family and friends. **A Matter of Balance** can help people improve their quality of life and remain independent.



A Matter of Balance is designed to reduce the fear of falling and increase activity levels among older adults. Participants learn to set realistic goals to increase activity, change their environment to reduce fall risk factors, and learn simple exercises to increase strength and balance.

Geisinger Health Plan in association with the Union-Snyder Agency on Aging, Inc. is offering **A Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns About Falls** starting **November 13 on Mondays and Thursdays, 10 am – 12 Noon**

through December 14. Classes will not be held the week of Thanksgiving (November 20 or 23). A workbook is provided and refreshments are served. Classes will be held at the Regional Engagement Center, 429 North 8th Street, Selinsgrove, PA 17870.

Who Should Attend?

Anyone who is concerned about falls, is interested in improving balance, flexibility and strength, has fallen in the past, or has restricted activities because of falling concerns.

What Will I Learn?

Everyone who attends the program will learn to view falls as controllable, set goals for increasing activity, make changes to reduce fall risks at home, and exercise to increase strength and balance.

Registration is required. Call the GHP Wellness Team at 866-415-7138 to register or for more information. ■

A Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns About Falls

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A Matter of Balance Lay Leader Model

Recognized for Innovation and Quality in Healthcare and Aging, 2006, American Society on Aging. A Matter of Balance Lay Leader Model was developed by a grant from the Administration on Aging (#90AM2780).

HCQU HEALTH FAIR



Pictured above is Larry Gipple of Danville and Barbie Reed of Selinsgrove with her furry friend, Brew, at the HCQU Annual Health and Wellness fair held October 19, 2017 at the First Baptist Church, Danville, PA.

Another Successful Year in the Books!

The 2017 Health and Wellness event took place on October 19, 2017 at the First Baptist Church in Danville. The event was sponsored by the Central PA Health Care Quality Unit, CMSU Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, Northumberland County Behavioral Health and Intellectual Developmental Services, Hope Enterprises, Inc. and Suncom Industries. Once again the fair proved to be a huge success.

There were 38 vendors who offered interactive healthier lifestyle education, free screenings, free carry-away information of their services and free door prize drawings for the public, especially individuals who receive support services for behavioral health and/or intellectual and developmental disabilities along with families, caregivers and support staff. The event also featured entertainment including therapy dogs, live musical entertainment including Victor Boris on the piano and a delightful dancing performance by *The Covered Bridge Clogging Group*.

The warm fall weather brought out many consumers, caregivers and direct support staff from surrounding communities. A sincere thank you to all the donors

of this annual event for their faithful donations year after year: Domino's Pizza, the Pine Barn Inn, Subway on Bloom St., Subway on Route 54, Unida Pizza, Whadda Pizza, Abigail House Bed and Breakfast, Giant Foods, Bason Coffee Roasting, CMSU, and First Baptist Church, all of Danville; CSG Bakery of Sunbury, Dunkin Donuts of Hummels Wharf, Reinhardt Foods of Coal Township, Weis Markets of Selinsgrove and Suncom Custom Care Center of Bloomsburg. Their generosity makes this community event such a huge success. ■

Brain Health...

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but any activity can help, including strength training, walking and tai chi, which have all been the focus of recent studies. Exercise probably benefits the brain just as it helps the cardiovascular system—by improving blood pressure, blood flow, weight, cholesterol levels and blood sugar. In addition, brain scans show aerobic exercise can actually improve brain activity and produce new brain cells and connections between them.

2. Stay Mentally Stimulated...

Use it or lose it: the old adage also applies to mental ability. Read, take a class, work a puzzle, pursue an absorbing hobby—whatever makes you think. Exercising the brain can enrich your life, banish boredom, help treat depression, confer a sense of accomplishment and be a way to make new friends—all good for mental health. A few studies on commercial “brain fitness” programs have yielded promising results, but usually the benefits are short-term and involve a limited set of mental skills.

3. **Have a Friends and Family Plan...** Being socially active helps older people maintain cognitive abilities and may reduce the risk of dementia, according to much research. Notably, a 2011 study from Rush University Medical Center in Chicago concluded that social activity and the complex interpersonal exchanges it entails help older people stay sharp. The most socially active people had only 25 percent the rate of cognitive decline, compared to the least social. Social activity was beneficial independent of physical activity and other factors related to brain function, such as age and overall health.

4. Keep a Lid on Blood

Pressure... Untreated hypertension can increase the risk of cognitive decline and dementia. In a study from the *Women’s Health Initiative*, women over 65 who had hypertension were at increased risk for developing brain lesions associated with dementia over eight

years. Even moderately elevated blood pressure can harm small blood vessels in the brain, resulting in white matter damage that increases dementia risk as well as stroke. Lowering blood pressure—by diet, exercise and weight loss or by medication—is good for the heart and the brain.

5. Strive to Keep Diabetes at

Bay... There’s strong evidence that type 2 diabetes (and possibly prediabetes) increases the risk of age-related cognitive decline and dementia. For instance, a 2012 study in the *Archives of Neurology* followed people over age 70 for nine years. Those with type 2 diabetes at the start or who later developed it showed faster cognitive decline than others, especially if blood sugar was poorly controlled. This may be because diabetes damages blood vessels, including those in the brain, and increases inflammation. Also, high levels of insulin appear to

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Did you know... One in 10 people age 65 and older (10 percent) has Alzheimer's dementia.

Brain Health...

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go along with declining memory.

6. **Watch Your Weight...** Obesity, especially in the abdomen, has been linked to an increased risk of dementia. For instance, a Swedish study in *Neurology* followed 1,500 middle-aged women for 30 years. Those who initially had an above-average waist-to-hip ratio were twice as likely to develop dementia after age 70, compared to thinner women. Since obesity often goes along with other factors that can increase dementia risk—such as diabetes, hypertension and lack of physical activity—it is hard to know which is the main culprit.
7. **Control Cholesterol...** Despite some anecdotal reports that statin drugs increase memory loss in some people, studies over the years have not found a link. In fact, some research suggests that statins may actually reduce the risk of cognitive decline and dementia. High blood cholesterol may contribute to the brain plaques typical of Alzheimer's. Thus, people



taking cholesterol-lowering statin drugs may get an added benefit—for the brain.

8. **Reduce Inflammation...** Studies have found that people taking NSAIDs (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, such as aspirin, ibuprofen and naproxen) have a reduced risk of cognitive decline or dementia. But the jury is still out, since clinical trials have had conflicting results. The drugs may help, in part, by reducing the chronic inflammation that plays a role in Alzheimer's. Don't start taking NSAIDs to protect your brain, since the benefit is uncertain and the drugs have potential side effects. But if you're taking one for other purposes, you may be getting this added benefit.
9. **Eat Smart...** Many studies have found that a heart-healthy diet based on vegetables, fruits and whole grains, can be good for cognition and may well help protect against dementia. (This includes the so-called Mediterranean diet.) It's not known which nutrients or plant compounds are most beneficial. Research has also found a link between fish consumption as well as moderate alcohol intake with a reduced risk of cognitive decline and dementia.
10. **Don't Count on Supplements...** There's no solid evidence that vitamins or other supplements (including ginkgo, ginseng and omega-3s) or special "memory formulas" can prevent mental decline. Exception: a vitamin B₁₂ deficiency can cause confusion and memory loss that can be misdiagnosed as Alzheimer's. Large doses of B₁₂ supplements, taken under a doctor's supervision, may alleviate this.

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Did you know... Almost two-thirds of Americans with Alzheimer's are women.

Sore Throat...

(Continued from page 2)

Strep is much less common than virus-linked sore throats. If not properly treated with antibiotics, it can sometimes lead to further complications. For this reason if you believe that you have strep throat, it is important to contact your doctor to get the appropriate antibiotics for treatment.

Infectious mononucleosis, which is usually brought on by the Epstein-Barr virus, can also cause a sore throat. Throat pain can also be caused by other situations such as from dental procedures, spicy foods, excessive shouting, dry heat, smoking, or breathing polluted air. In some cases, a sore throat may also be an early sign of a more serious disorder.

What if you do nothing?

Sore throats caused by a cold or flu virus are self-limiting and will clear on their own in a few days as your body builds up defenses against the virus. Viral sore throats don't respond to antibiotics, but symptoms can be diminished with self-help measures. Sore

Sore throats from bacterial infections require treatment with prescription antibiotics. Going without treatment can allow an infection such as strep to lead to rheumatic fever or other serious complications.

Home remedies for sore throats

Try pain relievers. Adults and children can take over-the-counter pain relievers such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen according to label directions. (Since a sore throat may be due to flu, children age 19 or younger with a sore throat should not take aspirin because aspirin use and flu in children is associated with a risk of Reye's syndrome, a rare but potentially fatal disorder.)

Use a home gargle. Gargling several times a day with a mixture of one teaspoon of salt stirred into eight ounces of warm water may temporarily soothe a sore throat and also help to break up any congestion.

Have a hot drink. A cup of herbal tea or chicken soup can help relieve a sore throat by warming and flushing the irritated membranes.

Use a humidifier or cool-mist vaporizer. This will add extra moisture to the air and help keep your nasal membranes and throat lining moist.

Suck on hard candy. This will help stimulate saliva production, thereby keeping your throat moist.

How to prevent a sore throat

Practice sanitary measures. The best ways to avoid catching or passing the microorganisms that trigger sore throats are to wash your hands regularly, avoid touching your nose, eyes, and mouth, and cover your mouth when coughing and sneezing.

Don't smoke. Avoid cigarette smoke and other throat irritants.

Brain Health...

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11. **Treat Depression...**Not only does depression impair mental vitality, it can actually cause severe cognitive problems. However, the reverse may also be true: cognitive problems may cause depression. If you're suffering from depression, seek professional advice. ■

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Did you know... Dementia is one of the costliest conditions to society.

Sore Throat...

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When to call your doctor about a sore throat

Contact your doctor if the sore throat lasts longer than one to two days and you have a fever over 102°—you may have a bacterial infection. Also see your doctor if you develop an earache.

Contact your doctor immediately if, in addition to your sore throat and a high fever, your voice becomes muffled or your tongue and throat swell. These developments indicate an abscess infection that requires early treatment with antibiotics and possibly surgery.

What your doctor will do

After taking a careful medical history, your doctor may take a throat culture if bacterial infection is suspected. If the diagnosis is positive, antibiotics may be prescribed. If mononucleosis is suspected, a special blood test will be done.

If you have recurrent sore throats and the cause is tonsillitis (an infection of the tonsils), your doctor may recommend a tonsillectomy to remove the tonsils. As with all surgical procedures, be sure to get a second opinion. ■

2018 PPC MEETING DATES

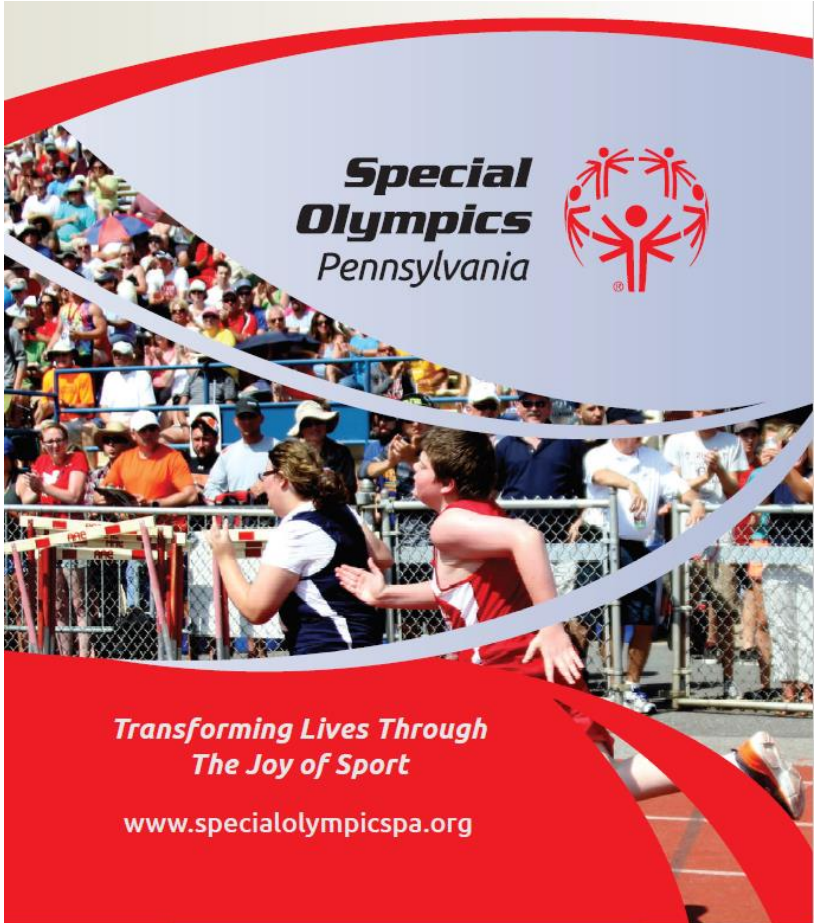
February 27

April 24

June 26

August 28

October 23



**Special
Olympics
Pennsylvania**

*Transforming Lives Through
The Joy of Sport*

www.specialolympicspa.org

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH THE JOY OF SPORT

Special Olympics is a global organization that unleashes the human spirit through the transformative power and joy of sport, everyday around the world. Through programming in sports, health, education and community building, Special Olympics changes the lives of people with intellectual disabilities solving the global injustice, isolation, intolerance and inactivity they face.

Special Olympics mission is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

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Special Olympics...

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Special Olympics Pennsylvania has 56 active county and city programs across Pennsylvania, serving a growing body of nearly 20,000 athletes with intellectual disabilities.

GET INVOLVED

In the moments of a Special Olympics experience, an athlete is transformed into a champion. In those moments, everyone is changed. We are introduced into a more open, joyful, tolerant, accepting and ultimately peaceful world. The world needs Special Olympics now more than ever. So please join us in changing lives, and in changing the world.



ENGAGE WITH US

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Butternut Squash Soup

A creamy and rich soup with savory hints of nutmeg and garlic!

- 1 medium butternut squash
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 1 cup (plus more to thin) homemade chicken broth or stock
- 1 sweet onion
- 2 tbsp. butter or coconut oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ½ tsp. nutmeg (or to taste)
- ½ tsp. garlic (or to taste)
- Sprinkle of thyme (optional)



Cut the top and bottom off of the butternut squash and then use the knife to carefully cut remaining skin off. Cut the squash in half and then scoop out the seeds and save because they are great roasted! Chop the squash into small cubes and dice the onion. In a large stock pot, melt the butter and add diced onions. Sauté for 3 minutes until the mixture is starting to soften and then add the cubed squash. Sauté for an additional 5 minutes until the squash starts to brown. Add the coconut milk, chicken stock, and spices; bring the soup to a simmer. Simmer about 20 minutes until soft, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking to the bottom of the pot. Once soft, use an immersion blender or a hand blender to puree until smooth. Serve warm or you can make ahead of time to reheat for a fast meal addition.