



# YOUR AMAZING BRAIN

**Brain  
Health  
Scotland**



Your brain is amazing.  
Let's keep it that way.

[www.brainhealth.scot](http://www.brainhealth.scot)



**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.



**Stay Connected**



**Switch Off**



**Take Care**



**Reduce Risks**



**Move More**



**Eat Well**

Get started building your personalised plan by completing the online quiz at: **[brainhealth.scot/brainhealthplan](https://brainhealth.scot/brainhealthplan)**



# Stay Connected

Your brain thrives on company and benefits from the stimulation of 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.



# 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](https://thesleepcharity.org.uk)



# Take Care

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 high cholesterol.

Conditions that might leave us feeling socially isolated, such as hearing loss, vision 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.



# Reduce Risks

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

Air pollution particles can reach your brain through your lungs – and it's not just outdoor air quality, there are also things you can do to have cleaner air indoors.



Get help to  
stop smoking at  
[quityourway.scot](https://quityourway.scot)

Calculate your  
weekly units at  
[count14.scot](https://count14.scot)



# Move More

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

# Never too early. Never too late.

Here are some next steps you can do  
to look after your brain health:

## Brain Health and Dementia Resource Centres

Check out [brainhealth.scot/brainhealthcentres](http://brainhealth.scot/brainhealthcentres) to find your closest Brain Health and Dementia Resource Centre. We invite anyone, no matter your age, to come in for a chat about your brain health. You can create a personalised action plan that will help you think about practical and easy changes you could make to your lifestyle

## My Amazing Brain

There are as many connections between brain cells as stars in the galaxy. Using animations and activities, children imagine their brain as being full of stars and learn about healthy habits that will keep their stars shining. Our free programme for 8-12 year olds is aligned to the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence. Why not ask your kids teacher to deliver it in your school?

[brainhealth.scot/myamazingbrain](http://brainhealth.scot/myamazingbrain)



## Join Dementia Research

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](http://www.joindementiaresearch.nihr.ac.uk)



## Keep in Touch

Visit our website to find out more and sign up to our newsletter to receive monthly practical tips about looking after your brain.

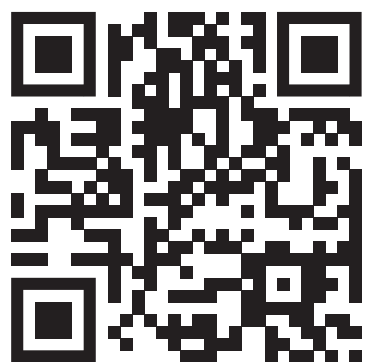
[brainhealth.scot](http://brainhealth.scot)





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

[brainhealth.scot/quiz](https://brainhealth.scot/quiz)



# 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**

**HOW**

**WHEN**

**WHERE**

**WITH**

**PLEDGE**

**I WILL**

**HOW**

**WHEN**

**WHERE**

**WITH**

**PLEDGE**

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## Notes



**Alzheimer  
Scotland**  
Action on Dementia

**Brain  
Health  
Scotland**

Brain Health Scotland is an initiative by Alzheimer Scotland to promote brain health and reduce the risk of dementia in Scotland.

Alzheimer Scotland is Scotland's national dementia charity. Our aims are Prevent, Care, Cure and our mission is to make sure nobody faces dementia alone. We provide support and information to people with dementia, their carers and families, campaign for their rights and fund vital dementia research. Find out more about our work at [www.alzscot.org](http://www.alzscot.org) and [brainhealth.scot](http://brainhealth.scot)

Brain Health Scotland is an initiative by Alzheimer Scotland.

Alzheimer Scotland - Action on Dementia is a company limited by guarantee, registered in Scotland 149069 Registered Office: 160 Dundee Street, Edinburgh, EH11 1DO. It is recognised as a charity by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, no. SC022315