

## Cognitive Health and Well-Being

A small amount of memory loss is normal as we age. We can slow this process down with exercise, good nutrition, reducing stress and performing memory-enhancing activities.

### **Exercise** (*always check with your doctor first*)

- Morning: Do light stretching followed by a 5-minute walk. Build up to a 15- to 30-minute walk during the next two weeks.
- Evening: Start with a 10-minute walk. Build up to a 15-minute walk or longer during the next two weeks.

### **Nutrition**

- This is not a diet, but an eating plan.
- Stop eating when you feel full.
- Eat three meals a day with 2 to 3 healthy snacks between meals.
- Drink 8 glasses of water a day.
- Choose healthier foods: fresh fruits and vegetables, whole-grain breads and pastas, nuts, fish and beans.
- Avoid processed foods.

### **Stress reduction**

- Relaxation is the key to reducing stress.
- Try activities such as yoga, tai chi and massage.
- Be social and keep active.
- Limit TV watching.
- Plan ahead and be organized.

### **Mental activities**

- Make the activities harder over a two-week period.
- Focus on what you are doing.
- Don't stop until you are done with the entire task.
- Try puzzles, such as Sudoku, crossword and word searches.
- Play games and read.
- Ask your speech therapist for worksheets to take home with you.

### **Sleep**

- Good sleep can help with clearer memory, mood and general well-being.

### **Avoid unhealthy habits**

- Don't smoke.
- Don't drink excessive alcohol.

*Adapted from "The Longevity Bible: 8 Essential Strategies for Keeping Your Mind Sharp and Your Body Strong," by Gary Small, MD, 2006. Hyperion Books 3/2009.*