

Ten Toxic Habits Proven to Damage Your Brain & Memory- Part 1

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This is the first in a series looking at ten surprisingly simple habits that are most toxic to the brain. They impair memory, reduce cognitive function, accelerate degeneration, increase risk of depression & lead to long term brain dysfunction. A few small changes taken now & continued will serve to protect your brain. Some you know. Some you don't. Maybe try & make your own guess list. Let's go.

Habit # 1 (*bet you guessed this*): **Eating The Wrong Foods**

Sugar – High blood sugar levels are a known Alzheimer's risk factor. In fact, Alzheimer's is called Type 3 diabetes. Sugar causes inflammation in the brain, reducing function, cognition & recall. Just one high glycemic meal (white bread, rice, flour) can lead to poorer memory immediately after eating!

Trans fats – Found in fried/processed foods & hydrogenated vegetable oils, trans fats impair memory function & increase cognitive decline.

Artificial Sweeteners – (like aspartame) These make the brain vulnerable to oxidative stress/damage, impair learning & increase dementia/stroke risk. So X-ray on the diet sodas.

Habit # 2 : Following the Same Daily Routine (*What ? Thought it was important!*)

The brain needs diversity & change to learn. Diverse activities require diverse adjustments & diverse behaviors which enhance cognitive function.

Routines are good for overall health, but life cannot be all routine for the brain's sake. It will help the brain maintain “neuroplasticity” (flexibility) & protect from “neurodegeneration”. Do at least ONE new/different activity every day.

Habit # 3: Sleep Deprivation

Amyloid plaques (*you have heard of those*) accumulate in the brain by up to 5% after just one night of missed sleep elevating risk of Alzheimer's!

The brain's waste disposal system (glymphatic system) eliminates insoluble protein clumps (toxins) during sleep. If deprived, these accumulate impairing memory & decision-making abilities. Other effects include moodiness, poor insulin production, slowed metabolism/ weight gain, elevated blood pressure & weakened immunity. So, no arguing...just go to bed! Get there before 11pm & stay there for seven to nine hours.

Habit # 4: Physical Inactivity

The term "neurogenesis" is the production of new, healthy neurons in the brain. The molecule that regulates this is called BDNF (brain derived neurotrophic factor). In studies, animals who had little to no exercise had significantly lower levels of neurogenesis as well as reduced BDNF. That's not all. When researchers tried to rehabilitate the brains, they found that even after 18 days of exercise, no recovery progress was seen involving memory & motor function. Physical inactivity has a truly negative effect on brain & body leading to cognitive & cardiovascular damage. Not ready to run the ravines yet? Even 30 minutes of moderate

exercise per day can be enough to protect the brain. So, take a walk, ride a bike, dance, swim, jump up & down....get a move on....daily.

To be continued.... stay tuned for part two & more of the ten habits damaging the brain.

*Information taken from an e-book on brain health published by Zonia.com.