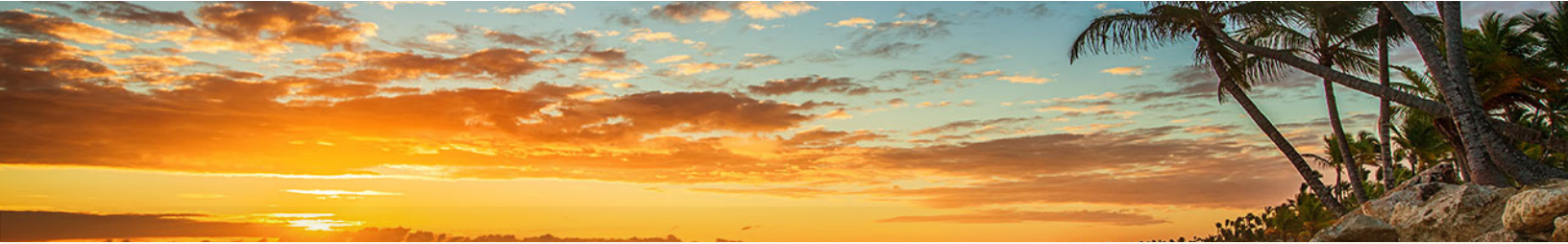


The Empowered Care Partner

Together With You on Your Ceresti-Care Partner Journey



FEATURED ARTICLE

June is Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month

June is Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month, as declared by the Alzheimer's Association.

The purpose of this annual declaration is to help raise awareness about the disease, and to show support for the millions of people around the world living with Alzheimer's Disease or another form of dementia and their care partners.

To honor and acknowledge *Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month*, this issue of **The Empowered Care Partner** will be dedicated to you and your healthy brain!

Facts you may not know

- Worldwide, someone develops dementia every 3 seconds, with approximately 44 million people currently living with the condition – a number that is expected to reach 135 million by the year 2050.
- Alzheimer's Disease is the most common type of dementia.
- It is a medical condition that affects the parts of the brain responsible for memory, language and thought.
- The risk for developing dementia increases with age, but it is not a part of normal aging. It is most often diagnosed after age 65, however it can also occur, less commonly, in younger people.

Not all memory glitches are caused by dementia, but when should they spark concern?

Although memory loss is one of the first warning signs, occasional forgetfulness or problems finding the right words does not mean someone is developing Alzheimer's Disease or another form of dementia. However, there are signs that should spark concern and can occur during the early stages of the disease. These include:

- Unusual changes in personality, behavior, and mood
- Becoming lost or disoriented, even in familiar places
- Frequent repetition of statements or questions
- Misplacing items in unusual or inappropriate places (such as placing house keys in the food pantry)
- Having difficulty handling and counting money or paying the household bills
- Having difficulty making decisions and displaying poor judgment
- Taking a long time to complete normal, daily tasks

If you notice the above signs, you might consider having your loved one screened for dementia.

How can you protect your own brain?

If you have a family history of Alzheimer's Disease or another form of dementia, you may have concerns about your own brain-health. This is

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understandable, but it's important to remember that although Alzheimer's Disease and dementia can be inherited, it doesn't have to be. In other words, APOE4 may be the strongest risk factor gene for Alzheimer's disease, but inheriting the gene does not mean you will develop the disease. That's because the ApoE4 gene is the type that raises the risk for developing the disease, but does not guarantee it.

That puts you in the driver's seat.

Many of the risk factors for Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia are **modifiable** - meaning, you can do things to reduce those risks, even if you've inherited one - or even two ApoE4 genes. Although Alzheimer's Disease cannot be entirely prevented, the onset of symptoms and progression of decline of memory and thinking skills can be delayed by living a lifestyle that supports the health and wellness of your brain.

To support your brain-health and reduce your risks, make a commitment to adopting the following brain-healthy lifestyle habits:

- Eat heart-healthy (and by association, brain healthy) foods
- Exercise regularly
- Manage your stress
- Adopt healthy sleep habits
- Nurture your social connections
- Engage in lifelong learning activities

Nothing is more important than your brain - because as always, your brain is what makes you, you.

For more information about the brain and how to support a loved one with Alzheimer's Disease or another form of dementia, visit Ceresti's Brain Health Education Portal at brainhealth.ceresti.com. Click on the Prevention tab to learn how to lower your risks for developing a memory disorder. If you are visiting the portal for the first time, use the code GIVECARE when you register.

By Marilyn Abrahamson - Brain-Health Education Specialist at Ceresti Health.



When Your Loved One Seems More Forgetful

You know your loved one better than anyone – so if they seem to be more forgetful than usual, you may recognize this as a *change* in their condition.

We all forget things on occasion, so how do you know when to call the doctor?

What's considered normal?

Human beings are imperfect, and that includes our memory and thinking skills. We forget things we read or what people tell us; we misplace our belongings and we become inattentive.

It is considered normal for your loved one to occasionally misplace their reading glasses or the book they're reading, only to find them on a table next to their favorite chair. Or, they may be talking with a friend, unable to recall the name of their favorite movie star or the name of a television show they watched the night before.

What's most important is that your loved one eventually does remember where they put that misplaced item (absentmindedness), or the name of that famous actor (tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon). In cases like this, the information wasn't actually lost, rather, it *wasn't available* to them at that particular moment.

Although it's always a good idea to keep an eye on any forgetfulness your loved one may experience, some of it may simply be a product of *being human*.

When to be concerned about your loved one's forgetfulness

If you're noticing that your loved one is having a harder time *thinking through* simple daily problems, even when you give them extra time and there are no distractions, you might want to consider making an appointment for an examination with their doctor.

If it begins to affect their ability to function day-to-day, it could be a sign of dementia. This means they have trouble doing daily tasks or remembering things that were not difficult in the past.

Examples of this would be:

- Forgetting newly learned information
- Requiring frequent repetition for daily tasks or activities with which they should be familiar
- Trouble navigating or getting lost on familiar routes like going to the supermarket or to a friend's home where they've gone many times before
- Realizing they are in a new location and not remembering how they got there
- Misplacing items in unusual or inappropriate places (such as leaving their keys in the food pantry)

If you suspect your loved one may have a memory disorder, don't delay calling the doctor

While it's always a difficult conversation to have, getting your loved one screened for dementia and if appropriate, diagnosed can allow you, your loved one, and your family the gift of more time to plan for the future.

Some forms of dementia, like Alzheimer's Disease, are progressive, meaning they will continue to worsen over time. Other types are not progressive and may be able to be stopped or slowed down if caught in the early stages.

So, if you're noticing changes in your loved one's ability to think and remember, especially if accompanied by changes in their mood, judgment, planning and problem-solving skills, or they're having trouble communicating clearly, it's time to call your loved one's doctor.



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FOUR FUN FACTS ABOUT YOUR BEAUTIFUL BRAIN

The brain is the most highly studied, yet least understood organ of the body. It's also the most fascinating, which is why even people who are not doctors or scientists are interested in learning more about what the brain does and how it works.

Why you should be fascinated by your amazing brain

Your brain is the command-center of your nervous system and makes you the person you are. It controls every aspect of your life from movement and behavior, to communication and emotion, breathing and swallowing. Despite all of this, scientists still struggle to fully comprehend all of the brain's capabilities, or how to intervene effectively when something goes wrong.

For all that is *not* understood about the brain, there are some amazing aspects that scientists do know for sure. *Let's explore four fun facts.*

- ***The brain is fueled by oxygen and glucose (sugar)*** that is delivered by blood pumped by the heart. Between 15 and 20% of the body's blood-supply is earmarked for the brain every day. Without a constant supply of blood flow, brain cells will die, causing brain damage.
- ***The adult brain weighs about 3 pounds.*** It has a high fat content, giving it a texture similar to Jello. About 75% of the brain is made of water, which is the reason hydration is so important. Even mild dehydration can cause glitches in memory and attention.
- ***The brain feels no pain.*** The brain has no pain receptors, meaning a patient can be awakened during brain surgery to perform tasks like counting, singing or even playing a musical instrument to ascertain that there is no damage occurring to those specific areas of the brain. Only a local anesthetic is needed for areas around the brain.
- ***Your brain loves it when you exercise*** because it raises your heart rate, increasing blood flow to your brain. This causes your brain to release a chemical called ***Brain Derived Neurotrophic Factor*** (or ***BDNF***), resulting in the production of new brain cells and neural connections.
- More brain cells and more connections between the brain cells mean a stronger, more resilient brain. This type of resilience, also called ***cognitive reserve***, allows the brain to compensate for any damage it may incur throughout your life in addition to delaying both age-related brain changes and cognitive decline.

As scientists continue to study this organ that makes us tick, one thing is clear – *there is still so much more to learn about the brain.*

What we do know is that there are things that you can do to take care of your brain and that's a beautiful thing. When we take control of our brain health, it puts us in the driver's seat.

If you want to learn more about how to take control of your brain health, challenge yourself to ***The Seven Steps to a Healthier Brain***. This can be found in Ceresti's ***Brain Health Education Portal*** under the ***PREVENTION*** tab. Use the code ***GIVECARE*** when you register.