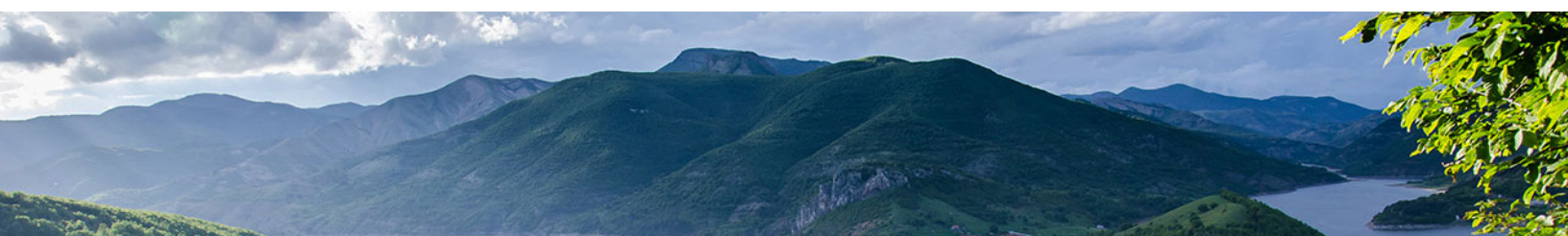


March 2025



# The Empowered Caregiver

## Together With You on Your Ceresti-Care Partner Journey



### FEATURED ARTICLE

## March is National Nutrition Month

March is National Nutrition Month. Here at Ceresti, we believe this is the perfect opportunity to focus on how healthy eating supports both you, as a caregiver, and your loved ones. Good nutrition isn't just about meals; it's about energy, focus, and overall health. Here are some simple strategies to make nutrition a priority in your caregiving routine.

**Plan Ahead** - Meal planning can save time and reduce stress. Dedicate a day each week to plan meals and snacks. Choose simple, nutrient-rich recipes that use fresh fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains. Preparing meals in batches and freezing portions can also save time on busy days.

**Involve Your Loved One** - Whenever possible, include your loved one in meal preparation. They might help with simple tasks like washing vegetables or setting the table. Involvement not only provides a sense of purpose but also increases the chances they'll enjoy the meal.

**Snack Smart** - Keep healthy snacks on hand for quick energy. Fresh fruit, nuts, yogurt, and whole-grain crackers are easy, nutritious options. Avoid sugary snacks that can cause energy crashes.

**Stay Hydrated** - Dehydration is common, but often overlooked. Make drinking water accessible throughout the day by keeping a reusable bottle nearby. If plain water isn't appealing, try adding a splash of fruit juice or slices of cucumber for flavor.

**Explore the MIND Diet** - The MIND Diet combines elements of the Mediterranean and DASH diets, focusing on foods that support brain health. It emphasizes leafy greens, berries, nuts, whole grains, fish, and olive oil while limiting red meat, butter, and sugar. Studies suggest the MIND Diet can improve cognitive function and may reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease. Including these brain-boosting foods in your meals can benefit both you and your loved one.

## FEATURED ARTICLE

Continued from Page 1

**Be Kind to Yourself** - Caregivers often put their own needs last, but maintaining your health is vital. Set aside time to eat regular meals, even if it's just a quick sandwich or salad. Remember, taking care of yourself allows you to better care for others.

This National Nutrition Month, we encourage you to take small steps to improve nutrition for yourself and your loved one. Even small changes can lead to big benefits for health and well-being.

By Marilyn Abrahamson, Brain Health Education Specialist at Ceresti Health

## FAST FACTS FOR CAREGIVERS

### HEART HEALTH AWARENESS

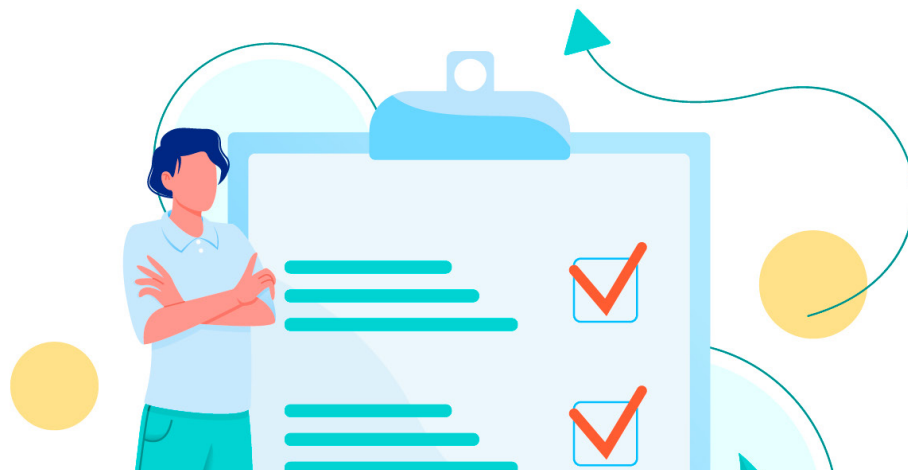
Recognizing the early signs of a stroke or heart attack can save lives. For a stroke, think **FAST**:

- **F**ace drooping
- **A**rm weakness
- **S**peech difficulty
- **T**ime to call 911

Other stroke symptoms include sudden confusion, trouble seeing, or loss of balance.

Heart attack warning signs include *chest pain or pressure, shortness of breath, nausea, lightheadedness, or pain in the arms, neck, or jaw*. Symptoms can differ in women, who may feel fatigue, dizziness, or stomach discomfort.

If you notice these signs, don't delay—call 911 immediately. Acting quickly ensures better outcomes for your loved one.



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For more brain-healthy tips, explore **Ceresti's Brain Health Education Portal** at [brainhealth.ceresti.com](https://brainhealth.ceresti.com). Use the code **GIVECARE** to register.

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# Strengthen Your Brain with Physical and Mental Multitasking

As a caregiver, you're already used to juggling multiple tasks at one time. But did you know that combining physical and mental activities can give your brain an extra boost? Engaging your body and mind at the same time challenges your brain in new ways and helps keep it sharp.

Here's how you can start.

**Why It Works** - Your brain loves a challenge, and multitasking with purpose creates new pathways between neurons. These connections strengthen brain function, improving memory, focus, and problem-solving skills. Plus, combining physical and mental activities supports overall brain health by increasing blood flow to the brain.

**Simple Ideas to Try** - You don't need special equipment to start combining physical and mental multitasking. Here are a few examples:

1. **Walk and Talk:** Go for a walk while practicing conversation skills or brainstorming solutions to a problem.
2. **Dance and Count:** Put on your favorite music and count the beats as you dance. For an extra challenge, try counting backward.
3. **Balance and Recall:** Stand on one foot while reciting a list of items, such as groceries or names of friends.
4. **Stretch and Spell:** Do gentle stretches while spelling words backward or naming objects in a category, like fruits or animals.

**Make It Fun** - Incorporate these activities into your daily routine. Challenge yourself to come up with your own combinations of physical and mental tasks. You can even turn it into a game to share with loved ones.

**The Caregiver Advantage** - As a caregiver, you're often focused on helping others. But taking time for your own brain health benefits everyone. A sharper mind helps you think clearly and manage stress, making you an even better caregiver.

Start small and build up over time. By making these activities part of your routine, you'll enjoy a healthier brain while staying active.

It's a win-win for both body and mind!

To learn more about how to boost brain health, visit the *Ceresti Health Brain Health Education portal* at [brainhealth.ceresti.com](https://brainhealth.ceresti.com). Use the code GIVECARE to register.

## RECOGNIZING CHANGE

### CHANGES IN MOBILITY

As a family caregiver, your ability to recognize a change in your loved one's mobility is crucial. Changes in how they move can signal the need for additional support, interventions, or medical attention. Being able to spot early signs of trouble can make a significant difference in their overall safety and quality of life.

One of the first indicators to look for is **stiffness**. This might show up as difficulty bending joints, such as the knees, hips, or fingers, or complaints of tightness after sitting for extended periods. Stiffness can make everyday tasks harder and might be a sign of arthritis, muscle tension, or even early neurological changes.

Another key area to monitor is **balance**. Pay attention if your loved one wobbles when standing, frequently grabs onto furniture or walls for support, or seems unsure on their feet. Balance issues increase the risk of falls, which are a leading cause of injuries in older adults.

**Walking patterns** also provide important clues. Watch for changes in speed, uneven steps, dragging of feet, or difficulty navigating stairs. These signs could stem from muscle weakness, joint pain, or more serious conditions like Parkinson's disease or stroke.

If you notice any of these changes, it's important to act quickly. Start by discussing your observations with your loved one. They might downplay the issue, but explaining your concerns gently and specifically can help.

Next, schedule a visit with their doctor to determine the cause and explore solutions. Physical therapy, mobility aids, or home modifications may be recommended.

By recognizing these changes early, you can help your loved one maintain their independence and prevent avoidable accidents. Staying proactive is key to navigating the challenges of caregiving while ensuring your loved one's well-being.

### BITE-SIZED TIPS FOR A BETTER BRAIN

## Hydration for Brain Health

*Did you know that the brain is made up of about 75% water?*

Staying hydrated isn't just good for your body; it's essential for your brain too. Even mild dehydration can affect memory, focus, and mood. When your brain doesn't get enough water, it works harder to complete tasks, which can leave you feeling tired and foggy.

Here are some easy ways to stay hydrated:

- **Drink regularly:** Aim for 6-8 glasses of water daily. If plain water isn't your thing, try herbal tea or infuse water with slices of fruit or cucumber.
- **Eat hydrating foods:** Foods like watermelon, cucumbers, and oranges have high water content and can help you stay hydrated.
- **Set reminders:** Use your phone or a water-tracking app to remind you to take sips throughout the day.

Older adults and caregivers are at a higher risk of dehydration, so make hydration part of your daily routine. A well-hydrated brain is better equipped to handle stress, solve problems, and stay sharp.

Keep a water bottle handy and drink up—your brain will thank you!