Things You Can Do to Stave Off Alzheimer’s Disease

by YVONNE BANKS

Guarding Against Alzheimer's

There are many diseases out there that can be prevented or delayed just by lifestyle changes. Alzheimer’s disease is no exception. This affliction affects the memory of the sufferer to the point in which daily tasks cannot be performed or recognition of close family is lost in later stages. Simple daily additions to your life could keep this disease at bay. Let's take a look at some of these to help in slowing Alzheimer’s.

Lifestyle Habits to Reduce Alzheimer's Risk

Vitamin E

Studies have found that a large daily dose of Vitamin E (about 15 mg or 22.4 IU) may slow the physical decline in the early stages of Alzheimer’s. Patients with mild to moderate Alzheimer’s seemed to respond the best. It has been found that there is a 19 percent annual reduction in the difficulty of activities such as bathing and dressing after having a large daily dose of Vitamin E. The vitamin E regimen resulted in a six-month functional gain over a 2-4 year period. The patients in the study were also taking Aricept, a drug used to treat Alzheimer’s. The implication is that Vitamin E improves symptoms of this disease by improving self-care activities. Vitamin E should only be taken with a physician's guidance since it could interact with other medications like blood thinners.

Mental Stimulation

Mental activities such as crossword puzzles can help stave off Alzheimer’s disease. Studies have shown that mental games, puzzles and other activities that challenge the brain may be beneficial for Alzheimer’s patients with mild or moderate disease development. It seems that even doing 45 minutes of mental “exercise” twice a week can do wonders for patients. Researchers have found that mentally stimulating activities improved scores on memory tests and tests on the thinking processes of people with dementia. They projected there was about a six to nine-month delay with worsening symptoms. As an extra benefit, these subjects felt increased feelings of well-being and had improved communication with others around them.

Social Connections:

Keeping up one’s social life is thought to keep the risk of cognitive decline at bay. There have been studies done that show that maintaining strong social connections helps in preventing Alzheimer’s or slowing its progression. It is suggested that people who tend to develop Alzheimer’s may be less inclined to be sociable and engage in intellectually stimulating activities years before the diagnosis comes about.

Heart Health

Other health diagnoses may influence the development of Alzheimer’s. Vascular disease appears to increase the likelihood of the disease to surface. So if one has heart disease, stroke, diabetes and other conditions that

are the result of damaged vessels or a diseased heart, this will lead to a greater risk for Alzheimer's. Taking care of one's health is imperative to keeping Alzheimer's disease from rearing its head. Some studies have found that 80% of Alzheimer's patients autopsied also had cardiovascular disease.

Physical Exercise and Diet

When a person exercises regularly, the brain cells receive more oxygen from the increased blood flow during the activity. It is believed that this is a benefit in slowing Alzheimer's. Exercise may protect the brain through its benefits to the cardiovascular system as well. Diet can be very important for brain health and a healthy heart. It is best to follow a diet rich in whole grains, fruit and vegetables, fish, nuts, olive oil and other healthy fats that are high in Omega 3s.