



#### **4. Don't Skip On Sleep**

Get a good night's sleep.



Our brains consolidate and memories during sleep.

Studies have shown that people who don't sleep enough have more trouble learning new information, while sleeping well after learning something new helps convert the new information from short-term into long-term memory

#### **5. Be Socially Engaged**



Studies have shown maintaining rich, meaningful relationships and social interaction is a key ingredient—along with physical exercise, nutrition, brain training, and lifelong learning—is the recipe for cognitive sharpness.

#### **4. Exercise Your Brain**

Your brain is no different than rest of the muscles in your body--you either use it or you lose it.

Research indicates the brain is capable of retaining new facts and skills throughout life, especially with frequent intellectual stimulation. Intellectual



curiosity, pursuit of education, even games, reading and learning new activities are all fun and easy ways to exercise your mind.

*Your Pharmacy on Campus!!*



**UWI PHARMACY**  
**HEALTH SERVICES UNIT**  
 THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES  
 Phone: 662-2002 ext. 82150/82449  
 Web site: [hsupharmacy@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:hsupharmacy@sta.uwi.edu)

# **BRAIN HEALTH & YOU**



**UWI PHARMACY**  
**HEALTH SERVICES UNIT**  
 THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES



Your brain plays a critical role in every area of your life, from learning, working and playing, to personality, aptitude and memory.

With a few relatively simple lifestyle choices, you can better maintain brain health.



### 1. Get Fit

Anything that is good for your heart is great for your brain.

Exercise affects the brain on multiple fronts. It increases heart rate, which pumps more oxygen to the brain. It also aids the bodily release of hormones, which participate in aiding and providing a nourishing environment for the growth of brain cells.



Exercise stimulates the brain plasticity by stimulating growth of new connections between cells in a wide array of important areas of the brain. It has positive benefits for learning and memory.

### 2. Feed Your Brain

Most people focus on having a healthy body. Diet affects your physical health as well as your mental health. Certain nutrients play an important part in maintaining brain function.



**Choline** is a water-soluble essential nutrient, this means that it must be consumed through food for the body to remain healthy. Choline is formed from the neurotransmitter acetylcholine, which is involved in many functions including memory and muscle control.

Sources: Lecithin, Broccoli, Chicken, Eggs, Wheat germ



**Vitamin B 6** also known as Pyridoxal phosphate (the active form). This vitamin plays a role in the biosynthesis of important neurotransmitters.



Sources: meats, whole grain products, vegetables, nuts and bananas.

**Omega-3 fatty acids.** -Studies suggest that increasing your intake of **DHA** and other omega-3s **EPA** may improve cognitive performance. Benefits of Omega-3 DHA/EPA include an improved ability to focus and it acts as a mood enhancer.

Sources include : Fish ( salmon, sardine, mackerel), Flax , Nuts , Avocados



**Glutamic Acid** is the most abundant excitatory neurotransmitter in the vertebrate nervous system. It is formed from glutamate, an amino acid. It is used by every major information-transmitting pathway in the brain, as such it is involved in cognitive functions such as learning and memory in the brain.



Sources: Almost all foods which contain protein



### 3. Herbal Supplements



Some herbal supplements have been proven to improve aspects of brain function such as memory and concentration.

**Ginkgo Biloba** extract comes from a tree native to China. Extracts of Ginkgo leaves contain flavonoids and terpenoids (ginkgolides, bilobalides) which are renowned for their ability to improve memory and concentration.

**Gotu kola** is another herb that may impact on brain functioning. It improves cognitive function mainly learning and memory retention.

Cognitive benefits include increased attention, faster memorization speed, and improved memory.

