

A close-up photograph of several blue forget-me-not flowers. The flowers have five petals and a bright yellow center. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green. A white horizontal banner is positioned across the top of the image, containing the title text.

Keeping Your Brain
Active *and* Healthy

Keeping Your Brain Active *and* Healthy

Your hands have already been full juggling your loved one's emotional, physical, and financial needs. Thinking of ways to strengthen their brain health and cut out bad habits is another task that makes the load heavier for caregivers like you.

That's why finding a continuing care retirement community that provides memory support and assisted living to fit the needs of your loved one can ease everyone's stress. A true continuing care program will ensure that your loved one is in good hands and that you're empowered with the knowledge to best support them when spending time together.



Habits to Promote Brain Health

It's time to start that checklist for you and your loved one to tackle – and have fun with! – together. Here are some ways to fight memory loss and promote a strong, healthy brain:

- Going outside to enjoy the sun, nature, and fresh air is great for your body, physically and mentally
- Social interactions allow for meaningful connections, keep your brain active in conversation, and help with receiving and retaining information
- Classes and hobbies stimulate the part of your brain that promotes memory and learning and could lead to new opportunities to socialize
- A healthy, balanced diet, like the Mediterranean diet, keeps your overall body happy and active, making it easier for your brain to stay active as well
- Mindfulness and meditation practices teach you how to breathe and fight off harmful stress in your body and on your mind
- Challenge and stimulate your brain with games, whether they're solo or with friends and family
- Protect your brain from direct physical harm by always wearing a seatbelt in the car and a helmet on your bike
- Keep your heart healthy with regular exercise to avoid high blood pressure and chance of stroke or heart attacks, which could affect your brain and overall health
- A regular sleep schedule where you turn off all devices, put down your literature, hydrate, and get a full 7-9 hours keeps you sharp every day
- Find the balance in enjoying things in moderation, as we're all human



Habits That Regress Brain Health

When you're ready to make changes in your life, it's also key to know what to stop or avoid. The following are some habits that are harmful to your brain health and increase your chances of memory loss:

- A consistently poor diet, overeating, and drinking cause a variety of health problems in memory and brain health
- A high salt intake leads to high blood pressure, increasing your chances of stroke and cognitive decline
- Multitasking and excessive exposure to loud noises, screentime, and information cause stress and affect your ability to receive and process information
- An overall lack of stimulation is no good either, as it leads to an inactive brain and body
- Chronic stress can kill brain cells and shrink your brain, specifically the part responsible for learning and memory
- Sleep deprivation takes away your body's ability to rest and reset, affecting your ability to function well the next day in whatever tasks you take on
- Poor dental health can lead to serious diseases and inflammation that can add stress and affect your brain health
- Smoking has terrible effects on your entire body, but it also has been proven to shrink your brain, thus, your cognitive abilities
- Staying sedentary leads to a variety of bodily and mental harm, including depression, diabetes, and dementia
- Isolation leads to a loss of connection with others, making it harder to retain and acquire information consistently and enjoy those healthy serotonin boosts

An Active Life Makes an Active Mind

It's never too late to change habits, and it helps to make positive changes as a team to show support. Joining social activities and having a supportive community to connect with will always keep your loved one's schedule and brain busy. But opportunities to engage like that can be inaccessible or infrequent. Continuing care communities like Life Enriching Communities make it easy to join in on fun activities, big or small, without the stress of planning or fear of missing out.

You can access insights, tips, and tools for helping you navigate your continuing care options [here](#).





Next Step

Now that you've started the conversation, you will need to develop a plan of action to follow through with the decisions made. You can also learn more about assisted living [here](#).

Research Local Options and Arrange a Tour

The next natural step in the process is to start looking at your local options. Visit websites, request information, and look at floor plans. When you tour, take your checklist with you so you can review together afterward. You can schedule a tour for the LEC campus that interests you [here](#).

Counseling can be very helpful when making big decisions. Whether it's a trusted counselor or clergy, having someone willing to help support you mentally, emotionally, and spiritually is good practice.

Now that you've learned what you need to know about getting your loved one help, it's time to contact a professional.

Ready for the Next Step?

Check out our other resources at lec.org/resources to help you and your family age well.





Life Enriching Communities owns and operates six senior living communities (CCRCs)...

CINCINNATI AREA

- Twin Towers, College Hill: **513-853-2000**
- Twin Lakes, Montgomery: **513-247-1300**
- Confident Living, Tri-State Area: **513-719-3522**

CLEVELAND AREA

- Concord Reserve, Westlake: **440-961-3700**

COLUMBUS AREA

- Wesley Glen, Clintonville: **614-888-7492**
- Wesley Ridge, Reynoldsburg: **614-759-0023**
- Wesley Woods, New Albany: **614-656-4100**
- Wesley Hospice, Central Ohio: **614-451-6700**

**For additional resources,
visit us online at:
www.lec.org**



Life Enriching Communities is affiliated with the West Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church and welcomes people of all faiths. We do not discriminate and we provide free assistance in your native language, if needed. Find our complete non-discrimination policy at www.LEC.org.