

**WARREN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT WEIGHT MANGEMENT CLASS**

JULY 15, 2019

**BRAIN POWER!**

THIS IS ONE OF MY MAIN CONCERNS ABOUT THE AGING PROCESS! I READ AN ARTICLE YESTERDAY CALLED "BOOST YOUR BRAIN" IN THE PARADE SECTION OF *THE DAYTON DAILY NEWS*. I WAS VERY GLAD TO READ SOME TIPS ON PROTECTING OUR MOST PRECIOUS BRIAN CELLS FROM MENTAL DECLINE. WHAT FOLLOWS ARE SOME NOT-TOO-DIFFICULT SUGGESTIONS ON WHAT WE CAN DO! ACCORDING TO THIS ARTICLE, IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO TAKE ACTION! (WHEW! LOL)

- SO, ABOUT NUTRITION...WE ALREADY KNOW THAT OXIDATION AND INFLAMMATION ARE STRESSORS TO ANY CELLS IN OUR BODY. TO GUARD AGAINST THESE PROCESSES, ANY PRODUCE IS GOOD - BUT TIME AND AGAIN I'VE READ THAT BERRIES ARE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL. YOU MIGHT BE THINKING, "WHICH BERRY IS THE BEST BERRY?" I'M GOING TO GO ON RECORD AS SAYING, "ANY OF THEM! JUST EAT 'EM!" REMEMBER THAT BOB HARPER, THE FAMOUS PERSONAL TRAINER SAYS THAT BOTH APPLES AND BERRIES SHOULD BE PART OF YOUR DAILY DIET. I BELIEVE HIM!

BACK TO MY ORIGINAL STATEMENT: TO BE CLEAR, THESE PROCESSES (OXIDATION AND INFLAMMATION) ARE GOING TO HAPPEN NO MATTER WHAT! WE JUST NEED TO TRY TO DO WHAT WE CAN TO SLOW THEM DOWN.

WHAT'S THE MORAL OF THE STORY? TRY HARD TO GET YOUR "FIVE A DAY!" IN ADDITION TO THAT, EATING LESS SATURATED FATS AND PROCESSED FOODS WILL HELP, AS WELL. STAY AWAY FROM FAST FOOD AND LEAVE THE JUNK FOOD IN THE STORE!

- THE NEXT ONE IS PRETTY EASY TO DO AT THIS TIME OF YEAR...DRINK MORE WATER! WE KNOW THAT EVEN MILD DEHYDRATION CAN AFFECT BRAIN FUNCTION. ATTENTION AND MEMORY ARE PROBABLY THE FIRST AND MOST NOTICEABLE CONCERNS. OBVIOUSLY, BEING HYDRATED AFFECTS OUR ELECTROLYTE BALANCE, INCLUDING SODIUM – WHICH IS LINKED TO COGNITIVE CHANGES. OUR BRAINS NEED THE WET STUFF TO PERFORM NORMAL FUNCTIONS! THINK OF IT THIS WAY: OUR BRAINS ARE 80% WATER.
- WORK WITH YOUR DOCTOR TO MAINTAIN A GOOD BLOOD PRESSURE. KEEPING A SYSTOLIC (TOP NUMBER) PRESSURE OF UNDER 120 WILL BEST PROTECT YOUR BRAIN.

- **SLEEP IS ESSENTIAL TO BRAIN HEALTH! THE GLYMPHATIC SYSTEM (NO, THAT IS *NOT* A TYPO! GLYMPHATIC, NOT LYMPHATIC!) IS A FUNCTIONAL WASTE CLEARANCE PATHWAY FOR THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM. (THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM, OR CNS, IS COMPRISED OF YOUR BRAIN AND SPINAL CORD.) DURING REST, THIS AMAZING PLUMBING SETUP ALLOWS FLUID TO FLOW RAPIDLY THROUGH THE BRAIN, FLUSHING TOXINS. IT APPEARS TO BE ESSENTIALLY DISENGAGED AND INACTIVE WHEN WE'RE AWAKE. HOW ABOUT THAT! JUST FYI, THIS PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN CLEANSING SYSTEM IN THE BRAIN WAS RECENTLY DISCOVERED IN 2012!**

- **PRACTICE MINDFULNESS. A STUDY HAS SHOWN THAT MEDITATION MAY ACTUALLY OFFSET COGNITIVE DECLINE!**

- **MEDITATION 101!**

- **SIT OR LIE COMFORTABLY.**
- **CLOSE YOUR EYES. IF LYING DOWN, IT MAY BE HELPFUL TO USE A COOLING EYE MASK.**
- **BREATHE NATURALLY.**
- **FOCUS ON YOUR BREATH AND HOW THE BODY MOVES WITH EACH INHALATION AND EXHALATION. OBSERVE YOUR CHEST, SHOULDERS, RIB CAGE, AND BELLY. SIMPLY FOCUS YOUR ATTENTION ON YOUR BREATH WITHOUT CONTROLLING ITS PACE OR INTENSITY. IF YOUR MIND WANDERS, RETURN YOUR FOCUS BACK TO YOUR BREATH.**

**MAINTAIN THIS MEDITATION PRACTICE FOR TWO TO THREE MINUTES TO START, THEN TRY FOR LONGER PERIODS.**

- **FORMER SURGEON GENERAL RICHARD CARMONA CALLS BDNF, A PROTEIN PRODUCED BY AEROBIC EXERCISE, "MIRACLE GRO FOR THE BRAIN!" EXERCISE ALSO RELEASES THE BRAIN-PROTECTIVE HORMONE IRISIN. BY THE WAY, LIKE THE GLYMPHATIC SYSTEM, IRISIN WAS ALSO DISCOVERED IN 2012. (IN CASE YOU WERE WONDERING, BDNF STANDS FOR BRAIN-DERIVED NEUROTROPHIC FACTOR.)**

**YOU CAN IMAGINE THAT THERE WERE QUITE A FEW DIFFERENT ARTICLES ON THE SPECIFICS OF THESE SUBSTANCES...BUT THE BOTTOM LINE (EXCUSE THE PUN) IS TO MOVE IT!!!**

- **TRAIN YOUR BRAIN. THE BRAIN YOU HAVE IS THE BRAIN YOU BUILD! HERE ARE SOME TARGETED BRAIN TRAINING EXERCISES:**

- **BRAIN / BODY WORKOUT: START BY CHOOSING A LIST OF BODY PARTS AND SPECIFIC ACTIONS OR MOTIONS THAT YOU CAN MAKE WITH THEM. THEN, WITH A FRIEND OR BY YOURSELF, PROCEED THROUGH THE LIST OF MOTIONS SLOWLY AT FIRST AND PROGRESSING IN SPEED WITH EACH ROUND. ONCE EFFICIENCY IS ACQUIRED HERE, ANOTHER LIST WITH MORE COMPLEX ACTIONS CAN BE MADE.**

- **CLARITY AND CALM PRACTICE: THIS IS MUCH LIKE MEDITATION. FIND A COMFORTABLE PLACE TO SIT AND BEGIN DEEP BREATHING. BREATHE AS DEEPLY AND SLOWLY AS POSSIBLE, ALLOWING THE THOUGHTS AND TROUBLES OF THE MIND TO SLOWLY SLIP AWAY. WITH PRACTICE, YOU CAN BEGIN TO APPLY THE TECHNIQUE WHERE IT IS IMMEDIATELY NEEDED (AND WITHOUT NECESSARILY SITTING AND STOPPING ALL ACTIVITY.) FOR EXAMPLE, FOLKS IN HIGH-STRESS OCCUPATIONS – LET’S SAY FIRST RESPONDERS – CAN LEARN TO USE THE SKILL AS NEEDED.**

- **AUDITORY MEMORIZATION: THIS CAN COME IN HANDY IN DAILY ACTIVITIES. HAVE YOU EVER RECEIVED DIRECTIONS WHEN TRAVELING, ONLY TO IMMEDIATELY FORGET IF YOU’RE TO TURN RIGHT OR LEFT? (DON’T ANSWER THAT!)**

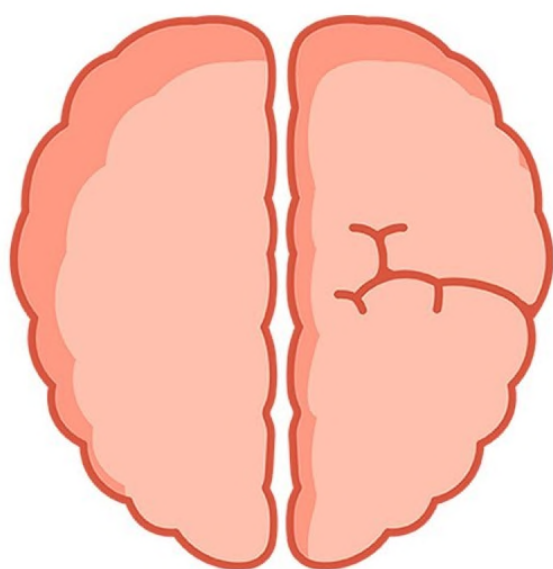
**IF ALONE, YOU CAN PRACTICE THIS JUST BY MEMORIZING THE LYRICS TO A SONG OR EVEN A SHORT INGREDIENT LIST FOR A RECIPE YOU’VE BEEN WANTING TO TRY. IF YOU’RE WITH A FRIEND, SAY RANDOM SENTENCES TO EACH OTHER AND REPEAT BACK. THIS REMINDS ME OF THE GAME “SIMON.”**

- **SPEAKING OF GAMES...PLAY BOARD GAMES! IN THIS AGE OF GADGETS, ELECTRONICS, AND COMPUTERS, THESE ARE OFTEN OVERLOOKED! BOARD GAMES ARE ACTUALLY AN EXCELLENT METHOD OF BRAIN TRAINING. DIFFERENT GAMES FOCUS ON DIFFERENT PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS, OF COURSE.**

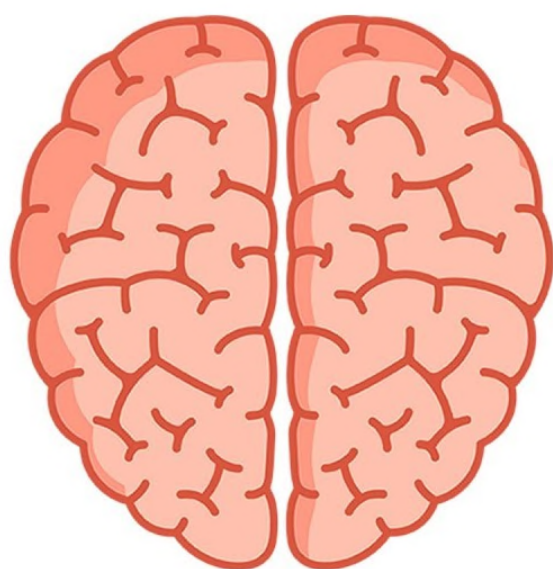
**HOW DID YOU DO WITH NO ICE CREAM OR FROZEN TREATS?**

**OUR “NO!” FOOD FOR THIS WEEK:**

**ONE MEATLESS MEAL!!!**



**TV**



**BOOKS**