

# BRAIN HEALTH BULLETIN

*From Dementia Care Specialists, ADRC Southwest Wisconsin  
1st Quarter 2024*

Dear Reader:

Welcome to the first edition of the new Brain Health Bulletin! The Brain Health Bulletin was started back in 2022 as a part of the Dementia Care Specialist (DCS) Program at the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Southwest Wisconsin. After a change in staff, the DCS program decided to restart the publication on a quarterly basis to bring awareness to the community about brain health.

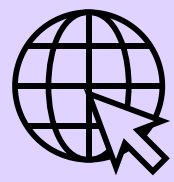
The Brain Health Bulletin is structured to give you information about all things brain-health related. From tips to keep your brain healthy, to updates in research happening in the dementia-world, to sharing resources for caregivers. The Brain Health Bulletin is meant to give a quick snapshot in each section to help get you started on your own research. There is an icon (Blue Brain Image with Black Border) located throughout the publication. To learn more about a specific topic, click on the icon to be taken to the original or outside source.

We appreciate your time in viewing this edition of the Brain Health Bulletin. If you would like to be added to the distribution list to receive future copies directly to your email, please [click here!](#)

Take care and stay healthy!

Dementia Care Specialist at the ADRC of Southwest Wisconsin

**Make sure to Like and Follow the Dementia Care Specialist and ADRC Of Southwest WI pages on Facebook and also bookmark [adrcswwi.org](http://adrcswwi.org)! If you have any friends or clients who would benefit from getting information, please recommend this page to them!**



## Upcoming Events

January through April  
Subject to Change

**2/22/2024**

1:00 PM Dementia 101  
Shullsburg, WI

**3/6/2024**

10:00 AM Boost Your  
Brain and Memory  
Virtual Class

**3/14/2024**

1:00 PM Dementia Live! –  
Shullsburg, WI  
Cori Marsh Presentation,  
Monroe, WI

**3/26/2024**

10:00 AM New Caregiver  
Support Group,  
Shullsburg, WI

**4/12/2024**

10:00 AM Stress-Busting  
Program for Family  
Dementia Caregivers



### Disclaimer:

Reference in this Brain Health Bulletin to any specific commercial products, processes, or services, or the use of any trade, firm, or corporation name is for the information and convenience of the public, and does not constitute endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by the ADRC, or its officers, employees or agents.

# Brain Health Breakdown

## The Importance of Physical Activity on Brain Health – Starting Small



Physical activity is just one of many lifestyle factors that may influence overall brain health. You may have commonly heard, either from your doctor or another health professional, that regular physical activity can benefit heart, muscle, and bone health. But, physical activity can be beneficial for brain health, too.

A research study published in 2020 found that compared to adults who are engaging in routine physical activity, cognitive decline in adults who did not engage in physical activity was almost twice as common. While physical activity is not the only determinate in health, research has shown the benefits of regularly participating in physical activity.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week (2). The key to finding success, especially for beginners, is to engage in small, realistic activities that get your heart rate up and help you reach the overarching 150-minute goal. Regardless of your current activity levels, do keep in mind that every little bit counts.



What are some simple ways to incorporate more physical activity in our daily lives? You may find yourself finding a lack of time to get active. Below are a few small ways that you could implement physical activity in your daily life:

- Instead of taking the elevator, try the stairs! If you are on a higher floor, let's say, on the fifth floor, try taking only one or two flights of stairs at first, and then finish up on the elevator. Again, you will want to start small and work your way up (literally and figurately).
- Park an extra few rows back when doing your grocery shopping. Not only are you getting steps while you are doing your shopping, but you will get additional steps parking further away.
- Walk around the house while you are brushing your teeth. We spend roughly four minutes brushing our teeth each day. Instead of standing in front of the mirror, try taking a few laps around the house – you could even go up and down the stairs a few times!
- Use your TV shows to your advantage! Commercial? Take a few laps around the house or pull out the hand weights for some quick physical activity. Did your favorite football team score? Try a few jumping jacks.

Remember, any physical activity is better than none. As we continue into the colder months, consider trying the last two to get more physical activity inside. Be sure to connect with your doctor before starting any sort of exercise program.



**If you have general questions and concerns please contact any of our local offices at 800-514-0066 or [click here](#)**

# Dementia Digest

## Facts and Updates



**10 Years of Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Research –2023 marks 10 years since the National Plan to address Alzheimer's disease was unveiled.**

### Hearing loss linked to small changes in the brain\*\*

Increased dementia risk associated with hearing impairment may come from compensatory brain changes. A team of researchers employed hearing tests and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to determine whether hearing impairment is associated with differences in specific brain regions and affects dementia risk.



### What is Lecanemab? The newest approved Alzheimer's Disease drug\*



Lecanemab (Leqembi®) is an antibody intravenous (IV) infusion therapy that targets and removes beta-amyloid from the brain. It has received traditional approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to treat early Alzheimer's disease, including people living with mild cognitive impairment (MCI) or mild dementia due to Alzheimer's disease who have confirmation of elevated beta-amyloid in the brain. Leqembi lowers beta-amyloid in the brain and reduces cognitive and functional decline in people living with early Alzheimer's.

### Risk factors for dementia vary by ethnicity, study finds\*\*

Data on more than 850,000 people in England was used to show that the impact of factors including hypertension, obesity and diabetes on dementia risk is magnified for people in some minority ethnic groups. Modifiable risk factors -- including hypertension, obesity, diabetes, low HDL cholesterol and sleep disorders -- confer a higher risk of dementia for people in some minority ethnic groups compared to White people, according to a new study.



### Brain lesions in former football players linked to vascular, brain changes\*\*

Signs of injury to the brain's white matter called white matter hyperintensities, as seen on brain scans, may be tied more strongly to vascular risk factors, brain shrinkage, and other markers of dementia in former tackle football players than in those who did not play football, according to a study published in the December 20, 2023, online issue of *Neurology*®, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology. "Studies have shown that athletes exposed to repetitive head impacts can have increased white matter hyperintensity burden in their brains," said study author Michael L. Alosco, PhD, of Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine.



\*alz.org \*\*sciencedaily.com

# Caregiver Corner

“There are only four kinds of people in the world. Those who have been caregivers. Those who are currently caregivers. Those who will be caregivers, and those who will need a caregiver.” — Rosalyn Carter

## New Dementia Caregiver Program Offered by Dementia Care Specialists

Starting in 2024, the Dementia Care Specialists of the ADRC of Southwest Wisconsin will begin offering a new program called Stress-Busting Program for Family Caregivers. This 9-week program is a multi-component, evidence-based program that provides support to family caregivers or persons with dementia. The program content includes stress and the impact of long-term stress, managing difficult behaviors/conditions, grief, loss, and much more. Each week, participants will learn and practice a new stress management technique. If you are interested in this program, please contact your local ADRC to find out when the class will be offered.

## Caregiver GPS – Learn how to navigate the journey of caregiving

Facilitated by the ADRCs of Dane and Rock counties, every third Thursday each month, hear from experts in the field on a specific topic such as dementia information, communication and caregiving skills, legal, financial, and crisis planning, home safety, asking for and getting help, and traveling and enjoying the holidays. For more information about this virtual webinar series, please contact Karen at 608-741-3615 or Ellen and Kayla at [danedcs@countyofdane.com](mailto:danedcs@countyofdane.com).



## Caregiver Support Groups

Caregiver support groups designed for family, friends, and other caregivers who are caring for a person with dementia, a chronic illness, or a disability. Groups are designed for caregivers to gain validation, emotional support, and strategies to cope and care for your loved on. The ADRC of Southwest Wisconsin has five caregiver supports groups and a listing of online caregiver support groups. Below is a listing of the current caregiver support groups. If you would like to attend or would like to learn more, please contact your local ADRC.

<u>Grant</u>	<u>Green</u>	<u>Iowa</u>	<u>Lafayette</u>
Caregiver Connect Every Second Wednesday; 1:00-2:00 PM; Memorial Building, 860 Lincoln Ave, Fennimore, WI 53809	Day Time Caregiver Support Group Every Fourth Thursday; 10:30am – 12:00pm; Green County Human Services Building (N3152 State Road 81, Monroe, WI) Lower Level, Multipurpose Room 1	Mug Club for Caregivers Every Third Tuesday; 10:30 – 11:30 AM; Iowa County Human Services Building, 303 W Chapel St., Dodgeville, WI, 53533	Lafayette County Caregiver Support Group Every Fourth Thursday; 10:00 AM- 11:00 AM; Townsend Center 190 N Judgement St, Shullsburg WI, 53586
Platteville Support Group Every Third Thursday; 5:30- 6:30 PM; Platteville Public Library, 225 Main St., Platteville, WI 53818; Conference Room (2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor)	Night Time Caregiver Support Group Every Second Thursday; 6:00pm – 7:30pm; Green County Human Services Building (N3152 State Road 81, Monroe, WI) Lower Level, Multipurpose Rooms 2 & 3		
	Grief Support Group Every Third Tuesday; 5:30pm – 7:00pm; Green County Human Services Building (N3152 State Road 81, Monroe, WI) Lower Level, Multipurpose Rooms 2 & 3		

# Technology Toolbox

## Apps That May Help the Brain Health of Caregivers



The Carely app helps you streamline and organize caregiving duties by connecting you to your care network. You can communicate and coordinate caregiver responsibilities and track activities and appointments via a shared calendar. Much like social platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, Carely also allows you to share photos of your loved one, post comments and questions, and direct-message others to make care arrangements. You can also use the app to find professional caregiving resources in your community and contact providers.

The Carely app is available as a free download on iOS and Android.



Lotsa Helping Hands is an easy-to-use private group calendar designed to help caregivers and family members coordinate a loved one's care. It allows you to schedule meal deliveries, rides, and visits — just invite family and members of your care team and easily manage everything through the user-friendly dashboard and calendar feature. Users can also share announcements and updates, exchange messages from loved ones, and share photos.

The Lotsa Helping Hands is available as a free download on iOS and Android, or you can access it via a web browser.

## InsightTimer

As a caregiver, caring for your mental health is essential for managing stress and preventing burnout. Insight Timer is a meditation app with the world's largest free library of more than 190k guided meditations from 17k teachers. It helps you master meditation techniques to help manage anxiety and stress, increase mindfulness, and improve sleep. You can build a mixed program with calming music, sound healing features, and chanting mantras. Caregiving can also feel lonely — discussion groups and other community features allow you to connect with other caregivers and users.

The InsightTimer app is available as a free download on iOS and Android.



There are so many apps to look into, a more detailed list can be found [here](#).

Another resource offered by the ADRC is a memory screen.

If you are concerned about your own brain health we recommend reaching out for more information or check our our next edition of the Brain Health Bulletin!





# Ask the DCS

**Question: Are there measures I can take to prevent Alzheimer's Disease and other types of non-reversible dementias?**

This is a question many individuals ask. Researchers are asking this same question. There is no clear consensus on prevention strategies, but research is underway. While there are some things we cannot control, such as age and genetics, there are several lifestyle considerations that may reduce overall risk. It is thought that "what is good for the heart is good for the brain." Keeping that in mind, the following may reduce your risk of developing Alzheimer's and other dementias as well as promote your overall health:

1. Participate in regular exercise: If you have not participated in exercise in a while start with simple changes like taking a walk down the block. You can also keep your body active by doing things around the house such as cleaning and gardening.
2. Eat a healthy diet: Eat a balanced, heart healthy diet including fruits, vegetables, fish, and whole grains while limiting fats and sugars.
3. Get quality sleep: Getting enough quality sleep is essential for your brain and body to reboot.
4. Partake in mental stimulation: Learning something new, practicing memorization skills, and doing brain teasers and strategy games can all help keep you mentally active.
5. Manage your stress: Stress management activities could include listening to music, prayer, going for a walk, or something as simple as taking a few deep breaths.
6. Have an active social life: Possible social activities include volunteering, going to the local meal site to play cards, and visiting with family.

If you would like more information about this topic, additional supports, resources, and education related to dementia, contact your local ADRC to get in contact with a Dementia Care Specialist today! Also, if there are any topics, information, or questions you would like to have covered in future additions. Please reach out to us!

**Bonnie Beam-Stratz, MA, MS**  
**Green County Office**  
**N3152 State Road 81**  
**Monroe, WI 53566**  
**Office: (608) 324-3600**  
**Email: [bbeam@gchsd.org](mailto:bbeam@gchsd.org)**

**Hailey Loeffelholz, MSW**  
**Grant County Office**  
**8820 Hwy 35/61 South**  
**Lancaster, WI 53813**  
**Office: (608) 723-6113**  
**Email: [hloeffelholz@gchsd.org](mailto:hloeffelholz@gchsd.org)**

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## About the DCS

The ADRC of Southwest Wisconsin maintains a Dementia Care Specialist Program as part of the Dementia-Capable Wisconsin Initiative that was prompted by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. The DCS works one-on-one with people with dementia or cognition concerns, their caregivers, or their family members to provide support, education, and resources to ensure the highest quality of life possible while living in the community. Additionally, the DCS serves as a community resource to provide education and training to local businesses, facilitate caregiver support groups, and lead educational classes for caregivers and community members. The DCS is a catalyst in the dementia-friendly initiative and works to raise awareness of the unique needs of people with cognitive concerns and dementia.