

The UConn Buzz



Keeping Your Brain Healthy

The human brain is a complex and remarkable organ responsible for controlling all bodily functions, thoughts, emotions, and memories. Brain health is important at every age. Keeping your brain healthy helps you to live longer and improves the quality of your life.

Science continues to improve our understanding of what a healthy brain is and how to maintain a healthy brain. As with many aspects of our health, some areas of brain health are beyond our control but there are many things we can do to improve and maintain brain health.

A well-balanced diet plays a crucial role in maintaining brain health. Incorporate a variety of nutrient-rich foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats into your daily meals. Limiting processed foods, refined sugars, and red meat can support overall brain health (National Institutes of Health [\(NIH\)](#))

Regular physical exercise benefits both the body and the brain. Engaging in activities like walking, jogging, swimming, or dancing increases blood flow to the brain, promoting the release of

neurotrophic factors that aid in the growth and maintenance of brain cells. Exercise has also been linked to improved memory. According to a NIH geriatrician “Exercise is especially important for lengthening active life expectancy, which is life without disease and without physical and mental/ thinking disability “. [\(NIH\)](#)

Engaging in learning new skills, such as playing a musical instrument, learning to dance or speaking a new language, can also boost brain health.

Sleep is essential for brain recovery and cognitive consolidation. Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night. During sleep, the brain clears toxins, strengthens neural connections, and processes information gathered throughout the day. Poor sleep patterns have been associated with an increased risk of cognitive decline and mental health issues. [\(Harvard Medical School\)](#)

Chronic stress can be detrimental to brain health. High levels of stress hormones, like cortisol, can impair memory and cognitive function. Practice stress-reduction techniques, such as meditation, deep breathing, yoga, or spending time in nature, to promote relaxa-

tion and protect your brain from the negative effects of stress.

Having strong social connections is vital for brain health too. Engaging in meaningful social interactions can help reduce the risk of depression and cognitive decline. Join clubs, volunteer, or spend time with loved ones.

Take precautions to protect your brain from injury. Wear helmets during activities like cycling or skiing. Follow traffic rules, and wear your seatbelt. Traumatic brain injuries can have long-lasting effects on cognitive function. Reducing or eliminating harmful substances can protect the brain. Excessive alcohol consumption and recreational drug use can have detrimental effects on the brain. Stopping tobacco use can also protect the brain.

Maintaining a healthy brain is a lifelong commitment. Remember, it's never too early or too late to start taking care of your brain, so start implementing these strategies today for a healthy brain.

Source: [CDC](#), [NIH](#), [CDC](#) and [Harvard Medical School](#)

HAPPENINGS AROUND TOWN

Celebrate Tolland, Saturday September 9 12-4pm at the Tolland Middle School, 1 Falcon Way, Tolland. Join Tolland for a full day of fun with good food, entertainment, kid games, information booths by local groups, contests & much more!! FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

Celebrate Mansfield, Saturday September 30th from 2pm-8pm. The [Mansfield Downtown Partnership](#) invites you to join in the fun at our [20th Annual Celebrate Mansfield Festival!](#) Head to [Downtown Storrs](#) for music, art, games, crafts, dance, puppetry, and more! For a full day of fun for all ages at the Celebrate Mansfield Festival

Eversource Hartford Marathon and Half-Marathon Saturday, October 14, 2023 8am. Hartford CT. The premier marathon and half marathon in Connecticut is celebrating its 30th running this fall! Continue to be inspired with the same glorious start in front of the majestic Capitol and the iconic finish line under the Arch at the Eversource Hartford Marathon and Half Marathon. Course updates have been made to enhance the New England road race experience while continuing to provide the highest level of safety and security.

Connecticut Veterans Day Race, Saturday, November 4 2023 at 9:45 am. Patriots Park 172 Lake Street, Coventry, CT 06238. The Connecticut Veterans Day Race is a fun and motivating event in our state to recognize and honor our brave men and women who have served. All veterans and their families know about sacrifice and patriotism; this event is an opportunity to celebrate and support the veteran organizations who serve them.



Baked Green Tomatoes

INGREDIENTS :

*1 cup cornmeal * 1 tablespoon dried dill weed *
Ground black pepper to taste * 5 medium green tomatoes, thinly sliced

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Lightly grease a medium baking sheet.
2. In a small bowl, mix the cornmeal, dill, and pepper. Dip tomato slices into the mixture, coating both sides. Arrange coated slices in a single layer on a medium baking sheet.
3. Bake 45 minutes in the preheated oven, until crisp and golden brown.

Image: NIH



Long-Covid

Most people recover from a Covid-19 infection in days or a couple of weeks. However, for some, symptoms can linger or return after apparent recovery. These symptoms can be on for weeks, months and in some cases years. This is referred to as Long-Covid. [Studies](#) suggest 10% of Covid-19 patients may go on to have long lasting symptoms. There are many symptoms of Long Covid. Some of the most common are: fatigue, fever, cough, irregular heart beat, headache, difficulty thinking or concentrating. There is no test for Long-Covid but medical providers take a complete history and do tests to

eliminate other explanations for the symptoms before diagnosing Long Covid.

The causes of Long-Covid are not fully understood but research is ongoing. [The National Institutes of Health](#) list some of the causes as: "SARS-CoV-2 particles may become active again, causing symptoms to reappear. Overactive immune cells may release high levels of inflammatory substances that can injure organs and tissues. The infection may cause the immune system to start making autoantibodies that attack a person's own organs and tissues"

Research continues on how to treat Long-Covid. Much of the treatment continues to be managing symptoms.

Currently in Connecticut there are several medical systems that have a Long-Covid or Post-Covid Program including: [UConn Health](#), [Hartford Healthcare](#), & [Yale New Haven Health](#). If you have questions about job accommodations with long Covid visit: [Job Accommodation Network](#).

Sources: [NIH](#),

Be Well is an employee wellness program provided through the Eastern Highlands Health District with funding from The CT Department of Health. The goal of the program is to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

