

BERWITZ & DiTATA LLP

Attorneys and Counselors at Law

310 Old Country Road Suite 101
Garden City, New York 11530
Telephone (516) 747-3200 • Facsimile (516) 747-3727

Lawrence N. Berwitz

Maureen R. DiTata

Slowing Alzheimer's: Things You Can Do

Memory loss; difficulty solving problems; becoming confused about place or date or time. Only a doctor can determine whether your or a loved one's issues are the result of Alzheimer's or something else, and that doctor should prescribe a course of action for treatment. There are, however, things that you might do to help slow the onset of Alzheimer's or other types of dementia. Several key recommendations have been offered by the Alzheimer's Research & Prevention Foundation and the Alzheimer's Association to help delay mental decline associated with Alzheimer's.

Make sure to eat right

Remember when your parents told you to eat your vegetables? They were right and that's a life lesson. Consume a healthy diet filled with fruits and vegetables. Try to replace red meat, which can be high in harmful saturated fat, with fish, which contains helpful omega-3 oils. A healthy diet can go a long way toward warding off Alzheimer's.

Avoid stress

It's no secret that stress can cause a variety of health problems, and Alzheimer's disease is no exception. The fact is, the body releases cortisol when it is under stress, which can damage brain cells that control memory. Find productive ways to deal with stress: exercise and meditation. Learning how to relax will help regulate cortisol levels and decrease stress-induced memory loss (important for caregivers too).

Get moving

Exercise can reduce the chances of developing Alzheimer's by up to 50 percent. Something as simple as going for a 30-minute walk or swimming in a backyard pool several times a week is enough to keep the body and the brain in good shape. Stay active. Go for a brisk walk after dinner.

Stimulate the brain

Just as it's important to exercise the body, it's equally important to exercise the mind. Research has shown that increasing mental activity can actually slow the progress of Alzheimer's in the early states. Activities like playing chess, cards or

mahjong, solving a crossword puzzle or reading a book are all great ways to keep one's mind engaged.

Bonus tip: Plan ahead

If you're beginning to notice signs of cognitive impairment, one of the most important things that you can do is to prepare for the future. Talk with family members about who will supervise care, research costs and explore options to pay for it. This type of planning won't slow the progression of Alzheimer's, but it will provide some peace of mind. Make sure that appropriate estate planning documents are in place and updated.