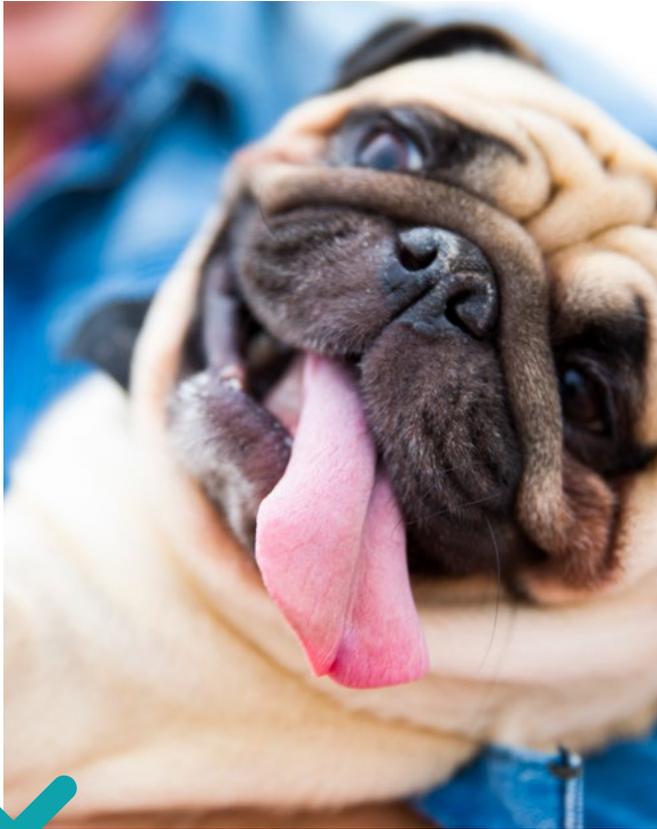


Brain Awareness Month

HEALTHY TIP SHEET - JUNE



Throughout life, experiences create patterns of activity that explain how our brains code thoughts, memories, skills and sense of self.¹

Want More Information?

Visit [NebraskaBlue.com/Wellness](https://nebraskablue.com/wellness) for additional health and wellness information and to take the Monthly Health Challenge – Give Your Brain a Workout.

Source: Wellsource, Inc.

The information contained in this flyer has been carefully reviewed for accuracy. It is not intended to replace the advice of your physician or healthcare provider.

¹<https://healthybrains.org/brain-facts/>, accessed 10/21/2019

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Do you sometimes find yourself trying to remember where you set something down? Your keys? A pen? If you've ever felt your memory slipping, you are not alone. Brain function is always in flux. Taking care of your brain with games, fun facts and important information and memories gives it a workout and keeps your brain healthy. Just like your muscles and bones, your brain needs a healthy lifestyle in order to improve memory, problem-solving skills and attention span.

8 Ways to Boost Your Brain Power

- ▶ **Drink more water.** Did you know that your brain is 75% water? When your brain is well hydrated by drinking plenty of water, you enhance memory, thinking and mood.
- ▶ **Eat more plant-based foods.** Research has shown that the healthiest brains are fueled by better diets. Eat more fruits, vegetables, nuts, fish, legumes and lean meats, and avoid foods high in trans-fats like fried foods, cakes and cookies.
- ▶ **Get your sleep.** When you don't get enough sleep, you probably don't feel so great. Your reaction time is usually slower. In addition, over time, insulin sensitivity is decreased which raises the risk for high blood pressure and diabetes. Aim for 7-8 hours of sleep each night.
- ▶ **Interact socially and stay connected.**
- ▶ **Be more active.** Your brain releases endorphins that enhance mood and reduce pain when you are active. This helps you feel less stressed and anxious. Use the stairs instead of the elevator when given the chance and look for other ways in your day to be more active.
- ▶ **Practice problem solving.** Engage your mind by thinking and solving problems such as crossword puzzles, Sudoku, chess or other strategy games. Playing games can help you think faster, have better focus and remember more.
- ▶ **Control your health risk factors.** By keeping your heart healthy, you also lower your risk for brain problems such as stroke or dementia. Keeping your blood vessels healthy can help you have a strong heart and brain.
- ▶ **Interact with or get yourself a pet to boost your mood.** Interacting with a friendly animal reduces cortisol levels (stress hormone) and it increases oxytocin (decreases stress). Pets can provide companionship, opportunities for exercise, lower anxiety and boost vitality.