



BRAIN, AGING AND SLEEP



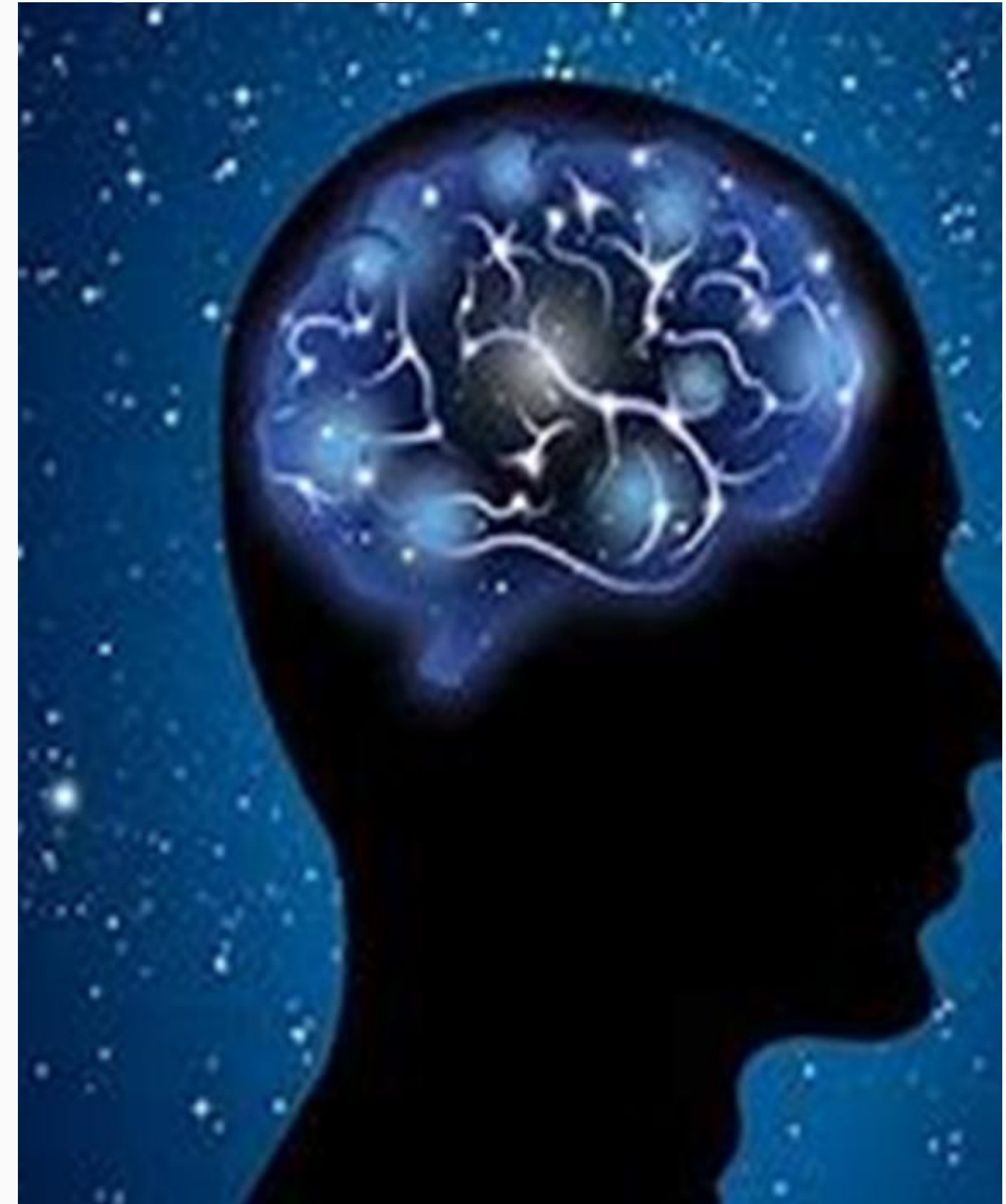


BRAIN, AGING AND SLEEP

So, over time, the brain ages and its functions significantly decrease, and the biggest culprit is wrong lifestyle habits. In order to slow down the aging of the brain, it is important to exercise the body and mind, get rid of stress and eat food rich in vitamins and minerals.

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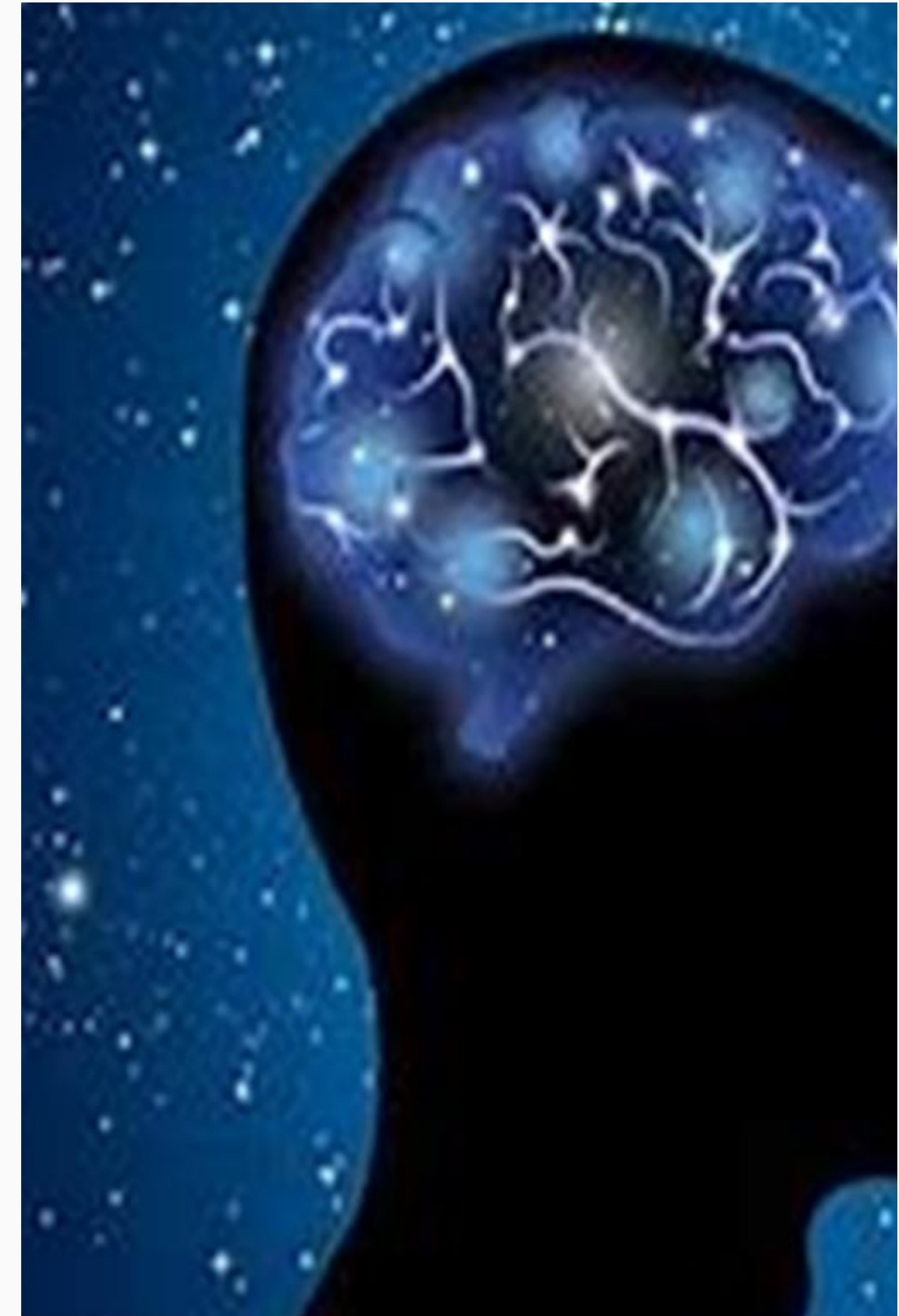
It is normal for the brain to age, and the signs of aging will be different for each person. They can be recognized by changes in daily behavior, problems with finding things, problems with memory or recall, concentration. Also, changes occur in the brain itself, where the number of cells change with age, and the cells die and are never renewed.



What causes brain aging?

Brain aging is influenced by a number of factors, some of which can be easily prevented. Smoking and alcohol consumption increase the chance of dementia and should be avoided. There are three other important factors that accelerate the aging of the brain, namely: diabetes, cholesterol and high blood pressure.

Blood pressure and cholesterol significantly affect the health of the heart, but also the health of the brain. Studies have shown that high blood pressure affects poor cognitive activities and increases the chance of Alzheimer's disease.





How to slow down brain aging?

To keep the brain from aging, it needs regular exercise. Various games, reading, and changes in certain lifestyle habits can help with this.



How to slow down brain aging?

- Good dream and reduced stress
- Mental activity
- Diet
- Physical activity

Good sleep and reduced stress

Short afternoon naps stimulate brain functioning.

German scientists have discovered that people who sleep for 10 to 20 minutes in the afternoon have better cognitive functions and a lower risk of apnea and insomnia, which are associated with an increased risk of dementia. Napping in the afternoon does not mean you can sleep less during the night.

Regardless of the afternoon nap, you should sleep 7 to 8 hours every night.

Stress can negatively affect mental health, but it can also affect brain health.

In order to get rid of excess stress, one should practice meditation, yoga, exercises and breathing techniques.

Mental activity

Mental activity - first of all, it is important to keep the brain active and constantly give it new tasks in the form of solving crosswords, quizzes, puzzles or simply reading books and texts on various topics. Learning new things can also help.

Mental activity

- Learning foreign languages. Knowing more languages has been shown to be effective in preventing dementia. People who speak at least two languages have a better memory even 4 to 5 years longer than people who speak only one language. The sooner you learn a second language, the better for your health.
- Social activities. Spending time with friends and family, especially as you get older, can be one of the best ways to ward off memory difficulties and poor cognitive function. Research has shown that people who participate more often in social activities have better cognitive skills. Social activities are associated with good mental health and a reduced risk of mental illness.
- Board games. Chess and other thought-provoking board games can keep your brain in good shape. People who play chess have a 15% lower risk of developing dementia. Such forms of social games can help develop cognitive functions. The more often you play such games, the better for your brain as you give it a few more years of healthy cognitive functioning.

Diet

Nutrition - it is often said that certain foods are "food for the brain", and this turned out to be true. Thus, a Mediterranean diet: blue fish, olive oil, whole grains, legumes, nuts, seeds, lots of fruits and vegetables will have a favorable effect on work brain. Along with proper nutrition, it is important to take vitamins and minerals that will keep the brain healthy and prevent cognitive decline. Vitamin D is important for memory, and it is equally important to consume enough Omega-3 fatty acids, enough B group vitamins and minerals.

Physical activity

In addition to strengthening the body through exercise, the brain is also strengthened. It makes it easier for oxygen to reach the part of the brain responsible for thinking. Except cardio training combined with strength training, walking will also have a great effect. Certain exercises in which the brain has to work can also help, such as lying on your back and moving the opposite leg away from the body with the opposite arm. Dancing belongs to a group of aerobic activities that have been proven to stimulate the functioning of the brain and help prevent memory disorders.

Brain fitness

Experts from the Teaching Institute for Public Health "dr. Andrija Štampar" advises to find time for brain fitness in order to preserve cognitive functions.

It should be done 15 minutes a day, four times a week.

Brainfitness improves memory, attention, concentration, visual and auditory perception and speaking skills.

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The Institute thus prescribes brain activation through simple everyday activities:

- remember the words of a new song;
- start learning languages - renew your old knowledge, try to master a new language;
- visit museums, galleries - try to remember and describe what you saw later;
- be creative, find a new hobby or remember an old one, read, write, paint, dance...;
- apply word games, match puzzles or design your own, create memory games;
- change the order of the actions you perform every day, avoiding the routine, periodically change the arrangement of small things in your environment;
- regularly engage in appropriate physical activity, when possible use the stairs instead of the elevator;

The Institute prescribes brain activation through simple everyday activities:

- research online, learn ways to use computers and new computer programs;
- visualize - turn everything you want to remember into a picture;
- exercise your peripheral vision, concentrate on everything you can see without moving your eyes, remember and write down what you saw;
- with a short exercise of moving your eyes in two opposite directions (up-down or left-right), you will encourage easier memorization of the essentials;
- learn to play an instrument;
- set aside time for rest during the day in a way that suits you best;
- hang out with friends, family, meet new people, connect with young people, surround yourself with people who stimulate and motivate you;