



BRAIN HEALTH BOOST



Supporting Families in Our Community Affected by Alzheimer’s

*The Brain Health Initiative (BHI) is working to develop brain healthy communities, creating a culture that promotes brain health protective factors and decreases risk factors, thereby improving brain health, optimizing brain performance, and preventing and fighting brain illness across the lifespan for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond. **Today’s Boost talks about ways that we can support people in our community with Alzheimer’s disease and their caregivers.***

Research and support are critical for advancing the care and treatment of Alzheimer’s disease and dementia. One of the ways we can support these efforts is through fundraising and events that raise awareness about these brain illnesses.

The Alzheimer’s Association Walk to End Alzheimer’s®, calls on participants of all ages and abilities to join the fight against the disease. Locally, the **Walk to End Alzheimer’s is scheduled for 9 a.m., this Saturday, Nov. 20 at Ed Smith Stadium in Sarasota.** More than 400 residents are signed up to help focus attention and support on people in our community impacted by Alzheimer’s and dementia— both those with the disease and the people who care for them. We can support the event by registering to walk or donating to those who are walking. Information is available at www.alz.org/flgulfcoast. Safety protocols including physical distancing, contactless registration, hand sanitizing stations and more are in place for the event.

Alzheimer’s disease and dementia have a huge impact on our community. Florida has the second highest incidence of Alzheimer’s in this country. The Florida Gulf Coast Chapter of the Alzheimer’s Association provides education and support to residents of 16 counties (including Sarasota and Manatee), where more than 175,000 families — not including snowbirds— are living with the disease.

The Gulf Coast Chapter provides support groups for families living with Alzheimer’s, virtual education programs for caregivers, and raises awareness through programs like the Brain Bus, which provides statewide outreach. Using a computer, tablet, or smartphone, participants have access to information about the benefits of early detection, early diagnosis, brain health, risk reduction, how to receive an accurate diagnosis, and the latest advancements in Alzheimer’s research. More information about these support programs is available on the [chapter website](#).

WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY TO PROTECT YOUR BRAIN HEALTH

In addition to the Walk to End Alzheimer's, the Gulf Coast Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association provides resources and support for the families and caregivers impacted by this brain illness. Here are some ways you can help support them in their efforts, while supporting your own brain health.

- **Volunteer.** Volunteers often help at events, provide educational programs, and provide office support.
- **Donate.** Whether it's time or money, your donation helps support research into causes and treatments for Alzheimer's disease, as well as their families and caregivers.
- **Advocate.** Additional money is needed to find a cause and cure and you can ask your congressional representatives to increase federal funding for Alzheimer's and dementia. Information on how to contact your representative can be found at <https://www.congress.gov/members/find-your-member>.
- **Know the signs of Alzheimer's disease and dementia.**
 - Disorientation.
 - Decline in judgement and problem-solving skills.
 - Language difficulties.
 - Visual and spatial dysfunction.
 - Changes in mood, personality, and behavior.
 - Decline in daily functioning.
- **BE BRAIN HEALTHY and adopt a lifestyle** that includes thoughts, behaviors, emotions, responses, and language that promote brain health protective factors:
 - Stress resilience
 - Nutrition
 - Physical activity
 - Sleep
 - Social connection
 - Emotional wellbeing
 - Meaning and Purpose
 - Cognitive stimulation and creativity
 - Engaging with nature
 - General health
 - Positive impacts

About the Brain Health Initiative (www.brainhealthinitiative.org)

The Brain Health Initiative (BHI) is a cutting-edge approach to protecting brain health, promoting brain performance, and preventing and fighting brain illness across the lifespan. The BHI is creating brain healthy communities, cultures that foster brain health protective factors and address risk factors, thereby improving brain health and optimizing brain performance outcomes for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond. Join the **Be Brain Healthy** movement, **because brain health matters, and lifestyle makes a difference**. To view all Brain Health Boosts [click here](#).