

BRAIN HEALTH BOOST



Plan a Family Brain Break

*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, we talk about how taking a brain break can — and should — be fun for the whole family.***

Our days are filled with homework, sports practice, play dates, and other activities that revolve around school and work. In our tightly scheduled world, we need family play time.

This weekend is a great time to get in a family brain break. Taking a break for some family fun doesn't have to be a big production: simple, silly, and meaningful activities create the memories that will last a lifetime for your family.

We all need breaks and as parents, we set the example for our active families. Focusing all of our time on work isn't healthy for us or our kids. So, encourage playtime and join in on the fun! You can incorporate exercise into your family fun time by going to the beach, a park, taking a walk, or going for a family bike ride. Florida's year-round warm weather makes family pool time a great way to cool off and have fun. Start a game of Marco Polo or form teams and play some water basketball.

If you want to stay inside, put on your family's favorite music and have a family dance party. Or plan an indoor treasure hunt. Write clues on some slips of paper and place the first clue somewhere easy for the kids to find. Then leave clues around the house, making a trail to the final clue. You can even reward the winners (everyone!) with an ice cream party.

We also live in an area with abundant activities — both indoors and outdoors. With increasing numbers of COVID-19 cases again being reported in the area, just remember to follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [guidelines](#), especially for younger children who are not vaccinated.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY TO PROTECT YOUR BRAIN HEALTH

Kids really do love having fun with their parents. Think about when you were a kid: Some of your best memories involve something simple and fun that you did as a family. Plan fun things to do on your own or check the community guides for ideas. Your kids will thank you!

- **Schedule a beach day.** You live in paradise so pack up the cooler and the sunscreen and head for some of the best beaches in the world.
- **Go to the Farmer's Market.** The Farmer's Market is a fun and a great way to start a conversation about brain healthy eating. The Sarasota, Lakewood Ranch, and Venice Farmer's Markets are open all year. The [Sarasota market](#) is open Saturday from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., the [Lakewood Ranch market](#) is open Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and the [Venice market](#) is open Saturday, from 8 a.m. to noon.
- **Get physical.** Lakewood Ranch offers a wide variety of sporting events, camps, and exercise programs, including Yoga and Fit4Kids. Visit [MyLWR](#) for information about everything that is happening in Lakewood Ranch.
- **Play tourist.** In addition to being a great place to live, the Suncoast region is a popular destination for tourists from around the world. Why not pretend you are on vacation and hit all of the local tourist spots? [Visit Sarasota, Sarasota Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources](#), [Bradenton Gulf Islands](#), [My Manatee Things to Do](#), and [Sarasota Arts](#) have lots of information about what to do and see.
- And don't forget to encourage your family **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, new approach to protecting brain health, optimizing brain performance, and fighting brain illness across the lifespan. The BHI is a collaborative effort with Massachusetts General Hospital, a Harvard Medical School Teaching Hospital, to build brain healthy communities through education, collaboration, research, innovation, and action, with a specific focus on *brain health promotion, prevention, early detection, evidence-based intervention, and optimization of performance*. The BHI is creating a

culture that promotes brain health protective factors and decreases 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](#).