



BRAIN HEALTH BOOST



Monitoring Brain Health Aids Alzheimer’s Diagnosis and Treatment

*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 are talking about new advances in monitoring Alzheimer’s disease and other brain illnesses.***

Improving brain health, optimizing brain performance, and reducing risk factors for brain illnesses, like Alzheimer’s disease and dementia, are at the heart of what we do at the Brain Health Initiative. That includes finding better ways to screen and monitor our brain health.

Monitoring brain health can help researchers find better ways to detect brain illness, such as Alzheimer’s, early and develop more effective interventions for treatment. Vital signs like heart rate and blood pressure are key elements of monitoring our overall health, but it is much harder to measure and monitor our brain vital signs. Researchers around the world are working to develop simple screening tools that can help track brain health and performance progress across time.

For example, the Academy for Brain Health and Performance, a founding partner in the Brain Health Initiative, has developed Brain Health Vital Signs™ (BHVS), a cloud-based, algorithm driven, HIPAA-compliant screener. This easy-to-use tool measures lifestyle factors like nutrition, sleep, and exercise that contribute to brain health and brain illness, as well as cognitive functioning beginning at age 14. The Brain Health Initiative will be conducting a validation study of the BHVS soon. BHVS^{v2} is already in development and is being designed to monitor brain health beginning before birth and following individuals across their lifetime.

Another example is the [Linus Health](#) platform for brain monitoring. The Linus platform uses scientifically validated tools and cross-validation metrics to provide a quick, affordable, and holistic assessment of neurocognitive health. These up-to-the-minute insights into our brain health allow us to know where we stand, where we are headed, and what we can do to reach our optimal brain health and daily performance.

The BHI will be adopting these and other platforms into our research and innovative brain interventions here in the Suncoast Region and beyond as we continue working to develop

solutions to promote and protect brain health and prevent brain illnesses like Alzheimer’s and dementia.

And just a reminder, there is still time to join the **Walk to End Alzheimer’s, 9 a.m., Saturday, Nov. 20 at Ed Smith Stadium in Sarasota.** Help support people in our community impacted by Alzheimer’s and dementia— both those with the disease and the people who care for them. Registration information is available at www.alz.org/flgulfcoast.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY TO PROTECT YOUR BRAIN HEALTH

Effective monitoring of your brain’s vital signs can help slow the decline associated with Alzheimer’s disease and dementia. The Brain Health Initiative encourages you to make sure you know these early signs and symptoms of dementia.

- **Progressive memory loss.** Forgetfulness and short-term memory loss may be the first sign of Alzheimer’s disease and dementia.
- **Disorientation.** Losing track of time or getting lost in familiar surroundings may be an early indicator of Alzheimer’s.
- **Decline in judgement and problem-solving skills.** It may become difficult for someone with Alzheimer’s to solve common problems or they may use poor judgement, which can lead to accidents or to falling victim to scams.
- **Language difficulties.** Someone with Alzheimer’s will begin to have trouble understanding what others are saying and struggle to find the right words when speaking.
- **Visual and spatial dysfunction.** An inability to recognize objects or their surroundings can make it dangerous for someone with Alzheimer’s to drive or be left on their own.
- **Changes in mood, personality, and behavior.** Changes in personality characterize people with Alzheimer’s. They may become apathetic, anxious, depressed, irritable, or even hostile.
- **Decline in daily functioning.** In the early stages of the disease, people will begin to have problems with activities of daily living — hygiene, getting dressed, balancing the checkbook, or preparing meals.
- While Alzheimer’s disease and dementia can’t be prevented or cured, you can slow the decline and **BE BRAIN HEALTHY by adopting 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](#).