

Brain Fitness Corner - Socializing is Good For Your Brain

Many scientists now believe that social interaction is important in maintaining good mental health and warding off diseases like dementia and Alzheimer's. Many recent studies document the positive effects of social interaction. Although, researchers are not certain what happens in the brain to produce the positive effects seen among the more socially engaged, it's clear that close relationships, and large social networks, have a beneficial impact on memory and cognitive function as people age.

In a study of 2,249 California women published in the July *American Journal of Public Health*, researchers reported that older women who maintained large social networks reduced their risk of dementia and delayed or prevented cognitive impairment. By interviewing the women over the course of four years, researchers accumulated data about the size and closeness of their social networks. Researchers asked the women questions such as "How many people can you rely on for help?" and "How many people can you talk to about private matters?" They also tallied the frequency of visits, phone calls and mail from family or friends the women received. The results showed that women with the larger social networks were 26 percent less likely to develop dementia than those with smaller social networks. And women who had daily contact with friends and family cut their risk of dementia by almost half.

Remaining socially active is an important part of an overall healthy lifestyle. Be sure to get your daily dose of brain fitness on the Dakim BrainFitness system.