

Live Well NOW!

“There’s something to be said about a fresh start, but there’s power in finishing strong.” Authors JRenee and Lisa McNeill, Here “TWO” Inspire You (HTIY)



Brain Matters: Exploring Stroke And Alzheimer’s Related Dementia Plus How To Improve Your Brain Health

By Lisa McNeill

All month long, we’ve been on a quest to help renew, rejuvenate, and restore our healthy minds, by exposing those things that have held us mentally captive and providing practical solutions to move forward. This week we are exploring contributing factors to memory loss and dementia in the African American community. In doing so, we did some research on stroke and Alzheimer’s, two diseases that have significant affect on mental capacity. At its basic level the brain is composed of three major parts that are responsible for thinking, problem solving, movement, balance, breathing, digestion, and heart rate, essentially, LIFE! It’s health is dependant upon so many of the choices we make in our daily life’s and those highlighted in the live well now series. It is important to note that some memory changes do occur, as we grow older, but memory loss that disrupts daily life is not a typical part of aging.

What causes debilitating memory loss?

One suspected culprit is a history of vascular disease or disorders, like high blood pressure, stroke, and heart disease.

November

What’s on your mind?

This month:

Week 1: Finances

Week 2: Relationships

Week 3: Stigma of
Mental Illness

Week 4: Brain Matters:
Dementia



Here are some eye opening facts, warning signs and symptoms, and important caregiver tips, to help you on your journey to a healthy MIND. It is our hope, that you take steps, in your own life, to reduce and eliminate those risk factors for stroke and Alzheimer's. Live Well NOW!

This you should know

- Stroke ranks as the fourth leading killer in the United States.
- It is more common and deadly in African Americans, than in any other ethnic or racial group in the U.S.
- The National Stroke Association reports that African Americans, aged 20-44 years of age, are 2.4 times more likely to have a stroke, compared with Caucasians. Case in point, at the time of this publication, comedian Patrice O'Neal, 41, died from complications related to stroke.

What is stroke?

- Stroke, also called Cerebral vascular accident (CVA), occurs when blood flow and oxygen to the brain is interrupted.
- Stroke can be caused by a blockage in blood flow, called an **ischemic stroke**.
- These blockages stem from three conditions: the formation of a clot within a blood vessel of the brain or neck, called **thrombosis**; the movement of a clot from another part of the body such as the heart to the brain, called **embolism**; or a severe narrowing of an artery, called **stenosis**.
- Bleeding into the brain or the spaces surrounding the brain causes the second type of stroke, called **hemorrhagic stroke**. Generally once that blood is removed or reabsorbed, function is restored.

FAST way to remember Stroke Warning signs

- Face-notice if one side of the face droops when smiling
- Arms-can both arms be raised evenly
- Speech-is speech slurred or difficult to understand
- Time-call 911 immediately for any of these symptoms

Vascular Dementia

Noticeable changes in memory and cognitive function can be frightening for patient, family, and caregivers. What role does stroke play? Due to brain tissue damage, it can lead to Vascular Dementia. Symptoms include memory loss, confusion, mood and personality changes, and difficulty with calculating, problem solving and decision-making.

Managing you're your risk for stroke and Vascular Dementia

I know, by now it sounds like a broken record, but **you** play a huge role in the health of your MIND. Diligently monitor and improve your blood pressure and diabetes, by making healthy food choices; incorporate regular physical activity into your day, and quit smoking! Easier said than done, right? Start with one area and make small, consistent changes each day.

What is Alzheimer's?

Alzheimer's disease is a progressive brain disorder that damages and eventually destroys brain cells, leading to loss of memory, thinking, and other brain functions. Most common changes to the brain include plaque formation, tangles, and inflammation. Currently, there is no cure, which makes research efforts critically important. At this time, patients take medications to alleviate and treat symptoms.

Know the 10 Signs: Early Detection Matters

However reducing your risk for Alzheimer's mimic those aimed at reducing brain tissue damage. Maintain and monitor blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes levels. Boost your brain health with foods like blueberries, red apples, broccoli, and red, purple, and black grapes and remain socially and mentally active.

Rest for the weary

"There are nearly 15 million Alzheimer's and dementia caregivers providing 17 billion hours of unpaid care valued at \$202 billion. More than 60 percent of family caregivers report high levels of stress because of the prolonged duration of care giving and 33 percent report symptoms of depression." Alz.org

Stress Relief For The African American Caregiver

LIVE WELL NOW!

THE MIND-BRAIN MATTERS

Here 'TWO' Inspire You

Twin sisters and authors, JRenee and Lisa McNeill, team up to bring you inspiration times two. Together, we are embarking upon a mission to be real, to be an encouragement, and to inspire each and every life we touch.

Combined appearances include Summer Literacy/Drama Camp and HTIY Teams Up With...

Did you know?

Solomon Carter Fuller, M.D., was one of the first known black psychiatrists and worked alongside Dr. Alois Alzheimer, who first discovered the traits of Alzheimer's disease in 1901.



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JRenee is an author, drama/mime coach in Baltimore city, with a passion for sharing her jazz-infused poetry, and stage production. She makes regular appearances as her famous character, Miz Milly.

Lisa McNeill is a children's book author and co-chair of the CEO Literary Group, with the [Atlanta Metropolitan Black Chamber of Commerce](#). She has a passion for finding creative ways to promote literacy, and inspire young people to be their very best. Lisa spent several years, as a registered nurse in Baltimore, caring for patients on a specialized Stroke care unit.