

Brain

HEALTH PROGRAM



Episode Guide

Summer



Brain Boost



Brain Health 101

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Program Description:

Brain Boost

Activities When Living with Early to Moderate Dementia

Brain Health 101

Activities When Living with Early to Moderate Dementia

Table of Contents:

Gardening	4
Mindfulness, Breathing & Meditation.....	6
Watermelon Cucumber Salad	
Recipe (Brain Boost).....	7
Southwestern Pasta	
Salad (Brain Health 101).....	12

Gardening



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Modifications

Gardening has many health benefits! There are many ways to modify gardening to make it easier that have been shared in the segment. Here are some additional ways to enjoy gardening.

Pause the video at anytime to discuss the video.

Plant a small garden in your yard, in raised garden beds, or pots.

If you do not have access to a garden, perhaps you could get some vegetables from a farmer's market or store. String beans, shuck corn, shell peas, stem tomatoes.

Take a garden tour in your area. There may be special gardens open for tours. Or you may have plants in your yard, neighborhood, or community park. You may even want to take a trip to a landscaping store. Make sure where you are includes a safe place to walk with no trip hazards. Make sure to take time to stop and smell the flowers blooming. If the flowers are your own, pick a few and make a bouquet. You could even give the bouquet to a friend.

Another activity about gardening is to view photographs of gardens. You could look at old photographs you have, view images online, or get some books from the library with pictures. Engaging together about your favorites, or most colorful, or your own experiences in the garden can provide meaning. Saying things like, “tilling the soil was a dreadful task, but picking the flowers made it worth it!”

Mindfulness, Breathing, & Meditation



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Modifications

If following along with the video is difficult, you may want to do the movements with a buddy. Sometimes we are more motivated when we have someone to do things with. By doing it together, it may provide helpful visual cues as to how to do the activity. If your loved one does not want to engage in the activity, they may enjoy the peacefulness of watching the video, or listening to the meditation. Observing is an activity that can also challenge the brain.

You may want to choose a few of the exercises in the video and do them repeatedly rather than doing a lot of different movements.

There are many mindfulness meditations that can be found online by googling mindfulness meditation.





Supplies Needed:

A large bowl

A small bowl

A kitchen knife

A cutting board with a damp cloth underneath

A dish towel for wiping up juice

A vegetable peeler

A Small spoon for scraping seeds

A juicer

Measuring cups and spoons

A tablespoon for measuring

A large spoon

A large bowl for discarding scraps

Ingredients

3 Cups Watermelon, chopped or balled

1 ½ C sliced cucumber, seeds removed

2 Tb mint, thinly sliced, or small mint leaves

1/3 C feta cheese, crumbled

3 Tb olive oil

1 Tb lime juice

Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

Slice watermelon into 1 inch or ½ inch cubes. Discard rind.

Remove tips from cucumbers. Discard tips. Run peeler down lengthwise sections to reduce peel. Discard peels.

Pull mint sprigs from stem. Discard stem.

Place watermelon, cucumber slices, and mint in large bowl.

Vinaigrette Dressing

In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, lime juice, salt, and pepper.

Drizzle the dressing over the melon mixture and toss to coat.

Sprinkle with feta cheese and serve.

Modifications

Making Watermelon Salad can be a great activity to do with your loved one! Your loved one may be able to do this activity from start to finish, or **with you** from start to finish,



depending on his or her cognition. Here are some suggestions for modifying the activity for success.

This activity can start with a trip to the grocery store or your garden. Have your loved one select the perfect watermelon and cucumbers. Ask, “how do you pick out the perfect watermelon?” You may be surprised at his/her response as there are many myths about selecting the perfect watermelon based on its gender, and its size or shape. You may find yourselves thumping the watermelon to see if it pings or thuds. What is perfect to one person may not be perfect to the next!

If using knives is now dangerous for your loved one, purchase pre-cut watermelon and cucumbers, or go ahead and have the watermelon and cucumber cut ahead of time. You could cut the watermelon in half, then use a melon baller to scoop out balls to add to the salad! You could also cut slices and then use small cookie cutters to make shapes.

A person with dementia can act as the “sous chef,” assisting in the kitchen. This role includes washing, scooping, scraping, getting things ready, and cleaning the kitchen. Helping organize is the role of the sous chef! Assisting in getting the rind and peels out of the way is a big help, as well as wiping the watermelon juice that is left on the cutting board!

Have a watermelon seed spitting contest! Who can spit the seeds the farthest? Did you ever go to a summer gathering and have a seed spitting contest? Reminisce!

When peeling the cucumber, see who has the longest peel! Make it into a game!

Your loved one may participate by being a food critic and letting you know how good or bad they think the salad tastes, or they may want to watch you do the work! Even observing is an activity that can be good for the brain!

Creating this watermelon salad heightens a person's senses! Visually, there is a lot of contrast with the red and green colors. Red can trigger appetite and make a person more hungry. This can be good because the summer months are hotter and people may become dehydrated. Watermelon is a natural thirst quencher, and can hydrate the body!

The fresh smell of watermelon, cucumbers, and mint can be pleasing! Combining the ingredients and eating them awakens the taste buds! Sensations are also heightened with hearing the crunch of the cucumber and watermelon!

And, of course, there is also the sensation of touch. Carrying a watermelon, feeling the juice running down your hand, feeling the coolness of the cucumber. These are all sensations that can be felt as you participate in this activity.

Another way to modify the activity is to simplify. Rather than making a salad, you could just eat a slice (or two!) of watermelon or cucumber! Maybe you could sit on the front porch while you eat your slice and watch the birds! There are many ways to engage with watermelon! And if you don't like watermelon, substitute a cantaloupe instead. You could also have your loved one add a few slices of cucumber and mint leaves to a glass of water for something different and refreshing! There are so many ways to modify this activity and enjoy being together!

Southwestern Pasta Salad



Brain Health 101



Supplies Needed:

Large pot

Large mixing bowl

2 Colanders

Medium size bowl for dressing

Measuring cups

Measuring spoons

Ingredients

1 box whole wheat spiral or bowtie pasta

1 can black beans

1 can corn

1 can petit fire roasted diced tomatoes

Dressing Ingredients

½ Cup Extra Virgin Olive oil

1 Tablespoon Red wine vinegar

1/4 teaspoon Garlic powder

¼ teaspoon onion powder

Salt and pepper

¼ Cup cilantro

2 tablespoons lime juice

Directions

Cook pasta according to package directions. Set aside to cool.

Put colander in sink. Pour corn into colander. Pour beans into colander. Rinse with water. Pour tomatoes into colander and allow to drain.

Whisk together dressing ingredients.

Place pasta into large bowl. Add vegetable mixture. Add dressing. Stir. Refrigerate for at least an hour. Then eat!

Modifications

This activity is very versatile. Rather than using a lime, you could purchase a bottle of lime juice at the grocery store. You could use fresh peppers, tomatoes, and onion, or other vegetables might prefer.

A person with dementia can act as the “sous chef,” assisting in the kitchen. This role includes getting things ready. It could include opening cans if safe, emptying food from the cans into the colander, mixing, and cleaning. Helping organize is the role of the sous chef!

Your loved one may participate by being a food critic and letting you know how good or bad they think the salad tastes, or they may want to watch you do the work! Even observing is an activity that can be good for the brain!

Be aware that kitchen safety is a priority. If using the stove is not safe for your loved one anymore, you can cook the pasta and have your loved one join you after that task is completed. This recipe has several tasks that can be simplified so your loved one can enjoy cooking with you!

