BRAIN Waves

Good Vibes for the Arkansas Brain Injury Community

VOL. 5, Issue 2, Spring 2023

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

NUTRITION TIPS FOR BRAIN HEALTH

Good food is one of the easiest ways to improve brain health, especially for people with brain injuries. The right foods can help heal our brains and improve brain function. Read on for important brain functions and some foods that may give them a boost.

Memory

Avocados can easily blend into a smoothie or be added to a sandwich. Salmon has been known to reduce brain fog and symptoms of ADHD when eaten twice weekly.

- Avocado
- Broccoli
- Salmon
- Walnuts
- Coconut Oil
- Coffee

Concentration/Attention

Beets are great in slaws and salads. Broccoli is high in vitamin K and is easy to add to casseroles. Try eating a handful of walnuts a day for alertness and concentration. You can add them to trail mix, oatmeal, or even cookies! Turmeric is a mild spice that can be added to a savory dish or smoothie.

- Beets
- Avocado
- Broccoli
- Salmon
- Walnuts
- Turmeric
- Coffee

Cognition (Thinking)

Eating these foods regularly can help with activities of daily living (ADL's) and cognitive tests. Try eating dark chocolate that is at least 70% cacao; pairs great with pumpkin seeds!. One orange or serving of orange juice daily improves overall brain function.

- Avocado
- Dark Chocolate
- Coconut Oil
- Pumpkin Seeds
- Sage
- Coffee
- Oranges
- Green Tea
- Lamb
- Eggs

ASK the Specialist

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Coffee lovers will be happy to know that coffee doesn't just give you a boost of energy; it helps attention, alertness, and thinking, and can slow cognitive decline.

Long-Term Brain Health

These foods may improve overall brain health and prevent future decline. Two or more servings of blueberries daily protect the brain from stress. Sage is a rich herb that can be added to sauces and casseroles. Switch out white flour tortillas and bread for whole grain choices. Kale is great in soups and salads, and rosemary pairs well with potatoes.

- Walnuts
- Blueberries
- Rosemary
- Tomatoes
- Sage
- Coffee
- Whole Grains
- Kale
- Soy
- Ginseng

Try adding one or two new foods at a time to your regular diet to see the benefits of these foods. Just be careful to watch your caffeine intake with coffee, tea, and chocolate.

https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/foods-linked-to-better-brainpower

https://facty.com/lifestyle/wellness/10-of-the-best-brain-foods/

Suggest a topic! Email us at **braininjury@uams.edu**

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SURVIVOR STORY: REA GLADSTONE

AS TOLD TO KRISTEN ALEXANDER



Rea with his wife Kermie and their 5 grandchildren

Rea Gladstone was in his early 50s and had a very active weekend routine. He would close up shop at Windstream on Friday, where he was director of operation support. At home, he would mow the lawn and complete his other chores.

On Saturday mornings, he would play 18 holes of golf —walking and using a push cart —in Hot Springs Village, and then rode his bike on Sundays after church, usually on the river trail in Little Rock. His bike rides were serious; clip-in shoes, professional-grade road bikes, and long distances.

When Rea locked up at work on a normal Friday in July 2011, he had no idea that it would be the last time he went through this routine. On Sunday, July 10, Rea went into cardiac arrest after he got home from his bike ride. Thankfully, his son was there and started CPR, saving Rea's life. But at the hospital the family learned that the cardiac arrest had caused an anoxic brain injury. He had to go to rehab for several months at Baptist Health Rehabilitation Institute (BHRI) to learn how to fully function again.

After his time at BHRI, Rea couldn't drive or be left alone, so his parents came down from New York to help take care of him. As much as he was grateful for their support, it was hard having to pack his suitcase to stay with his parents in Cabot for a couple of days each week. It felt like he was going backwards and he said, "It was difficult to accept that I couldn't make my own decisions."

Rea recalled wanting to buy a lemonade after therapy one day and his dad said, "No, you don't need it." His parents had their own rules, and he felt he had lost his independence. For a while, his dad would even attend therapy sessions with Rea. But after some time, they would just drop him off at the hospital for his rehab days. He would go to speech therapy and then to cardiac rehab, and then someone would pick him up.

Rea went through 2 years of speech therapy. What many don't realize about speech is that it is also for memory, thinking, problem solving, and other skills.

His therapist Cathi assigned homework, which Rea didn't like at first. The homework was difficult for Rea and his dad got too involved with it. But it was up to Rea to work harder at therapy. At some point Rea changed his attitude and started to work harder to improve and impress his therapist with his work. He realized that if he followed this feeling, it could help him recover.

> "Building models takes time and you accomplish something, and you feel good about it."

Cathi used Rea's love of reading to help motivate him. She would have him read sections of a book he liked and then ask him what he had just read and learned. The book that was used in therapy, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich by William Shirer, is 1,146 pages long. Having to summarize what he had read, which helped bring back his reading comprehension —or understanding. Rea said, "Cathi has been a tremendous person and speech therapist in terms of what she does with her patients —especially me."

He also offered high praise for his other BHRI therapists, Chad, Gayla, and Michelle. "Michelle worked with me when I was inpatient, on getting me back to the point that I could comprehend words better and other brain functions. It was a challenge at first, but she had the patience to keep me trying every time I was in her office." About Chad, he said, "I always enjoyed listening to Chad play the guitar. I was so impressed with all of the music Chad knows. When I was with him, he felt like a friend to me." And he said Janet "helped me with socializing with other patients and doing the games and other things that we did in the recreation room. She made me feel like I was participating in therapy and doing things that helped me to recover, which was very important to me and my wife."



Some of the model planes and ships Rea has completed

It was over 2 years after his cardiac arrest when Rea was recovered enough to go for a driving evaluation at BHRI. He failed his first driving evaluation, and was told to drive with his wife for 6 months. After that, he passed. That was a really big deal for him because he could finally be independent and drive himself to cardiac rehab, which he still goes to every week.

Rea has not been able to reconnect with his love of cycling, but he has found several other ways to keep himself busy. He rediscovered building model planes and ships, which was a hobby from his youth. At first, it didn't go very well. He ended up throwing away the first couple of planes he built. But, he kept going and they got better over time.

Rea believes this hobby is a good cognitive therapy exercise. "There are lots of parts and instructions to manage in the process of building. You really have to focus. I think it's a good process for somebody who needs something to do besides watching TV. It takes time and you accomplish something, and you feel good about it." Rea has now completed 29 aircraft and ship models, with one currently under construction.

He also reads a lot of books now that his focus is better. Rea is really into history and wartime books, many of which are really long. He sometimes goes back to some books to refresh his memory. He also loves John Grisham among many others.

Another hobby Rea has kept up is his love of golf. He said, "every time I play the office (his former coworkers), I'm trying to relearn the techniques." Golf is one activity where he really notices his memory changes. He used to be able to look at his rangefinder (a tool to measure distance) and know what club to choose. Now he can't remember what clubs go with what ranges, so his golf partner Kerwin Pruitt came up with a guide for him. He can look at the rangefinder and use the guide to help him pick the right club. He believes in the importance of finding the right tools to help overcome these losses.

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As much as he can, Rea volunteers when opportunities come up. He has volunteered for the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital golf tournament for almost 10 years as a hole marshall, for crowd control. He really enjoys their pre-tournament breakfast for volunteers. He loves feeling like a part of something and seeing the same people year after year. He has a few other tournaments he helps with and says the volunteers are treated really well.

He has also joined some treatment groups at UAMS as a peer support specialist, where he shares his experiences in hopes of helping others find their path to healing. He really enjoys this role and has learned a lot in the process.



Rea volunteering at the St. Jude golf tournament

One part of himself that Rea really misses is being able to fix things around the house like he used to. It can get him down when he tries to fix something and fails and then has to hire someone to do the job. "Those things that I used to do are not there anymore, and then I think about how my wife used to rely on me, and now she has to hire somebody."

He struggles with these feelings and can be pretty hard on himself. But he tries to focus on the things he can do. He does his best to have dinner ready when his wife Kermie gets home from work. He does his part of the housework, walks the dog, and keeps on learning more every day.

Rea's advice to others with brain injury:

- Try to be as positive as you can.
- Find things that interest you, like I have found with model building and reading.
- Exercise is important. If nothing else, at least get out and walk.
- If you find something you can't do (like home repairs), just move on. It's not the end of the world.

Free Brain Injury Fundamentals Course!

Do you know someone you wish knew more about brain injury? Ask them to take this class! Or maybe you are reading this and realize **you** need to know how to better relate to and help your loved one, friend, or client with a brain injury? We are here to help!

The Certified Brain Injury Fundamentals course is designed by the Brain Injury Association of America to teach more people the basics about brain injury. The Brain Injury Program is offering this 3-week course for free. This course will cover brain anatomy, vocabulary, behaviors, and tips to help you better understand and serve people with brain injury.

We have delayed the course so more people can join. Here are the dates:

Monday, June 5 from 1 to 4:30 p.m.

Monday, June 12 from 1 to 4:30 p.m.

Monday, June 19 from 1 to 4:30 p.m.

To sign up or learn more, scan the QR code (using your phone's camera) or visit:

https://tinyurl.com/bifun23



Got Ideas for Arkansas, Brain Waves, or our TBI program?

We want to hear from you!

Visit our short survey here (or scan the QR code above):

https://tinyurl.com/ARideashare

RESOURCE HIGHLIGHT

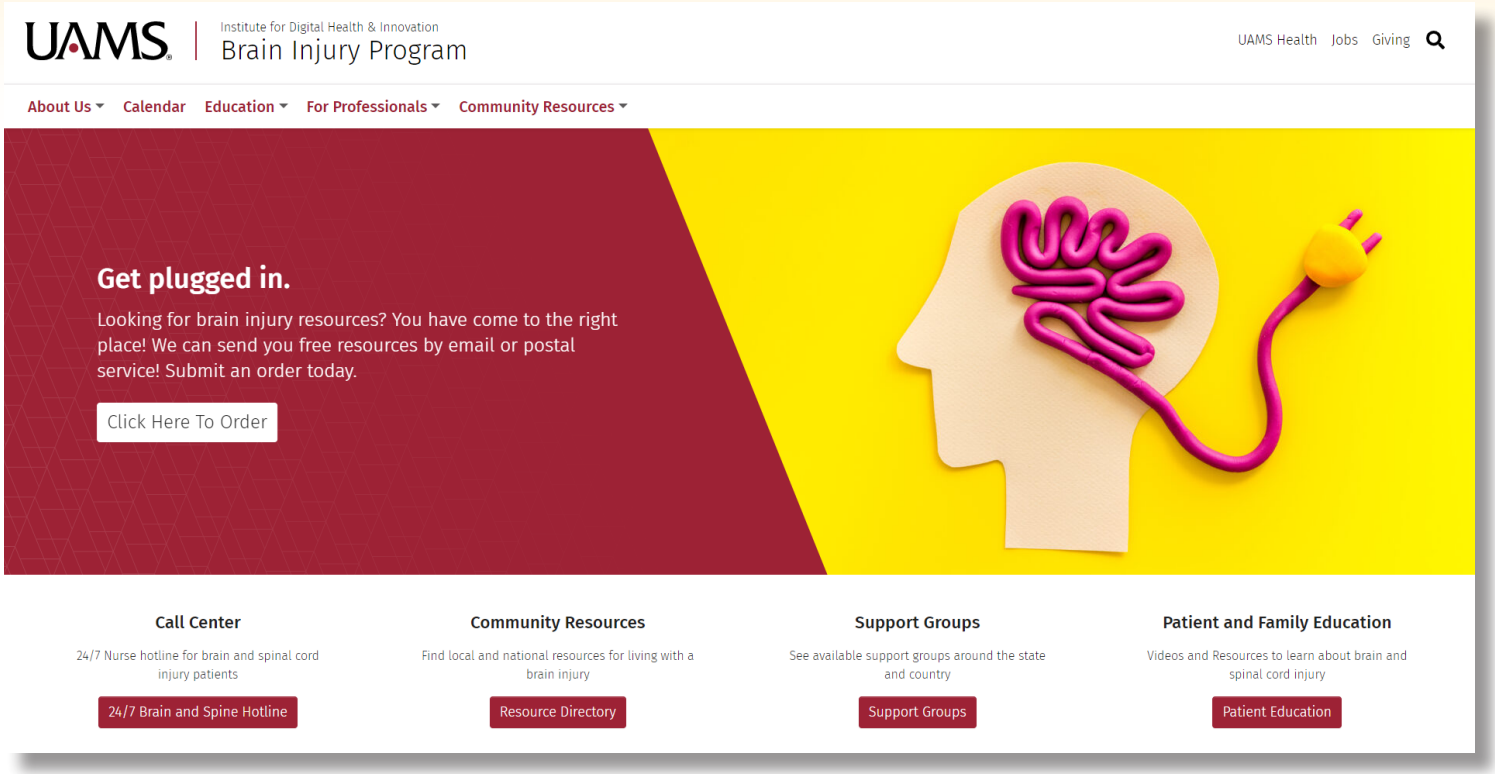
NEW BRAIN INJURY RESOURCE WEBSITE!

The Brain Injury Program is excited to announce that we have completely updated our website to offer you an even easier way to find resources! Our old address (atrp.ar.gov) should still work for now, but it will send you to the new site. The new address is:

https://idhi.uams.edu/brain-injury-program

Please bookmark this page so you have it when you need it.

You can also use your phone's camera to scan this symbol (called a QR Code) to see the website. Simply open the camera and point the lens at the image, then tap the link that appears on your screen.



Give yourself plenty of time to explore the website. Visit the ***Community Resources*** page to see a directory of resources by category, including:

- Career and education
- Social services and financial assistance
- Legal assistance
- So much more!

Visit the ***Education*** page to find our resource guide, the newsletter issues, educational videos, and a plain language glossary. See any upcoming meetings and events on the ***Calendar*** page.

Need help finding something? Use the "Contact Us" form to reach out to our team or call us at (501) 526-7656.

A SUPPORT GROUP FOR EVERYONE!

Our partners at Sources for Community Living in Northwest Arkansas have been working hard to offer support group access for every member of the family. We are excited to share that we now have THREE categories of online support groups, with hopefully more to come in the future!

Support groups are a positive place to meet people who understand your struggles, whether you are a survivor or a caregiver. They can also be a good place to learn new skills and strategies for living with your (or your loved one's) injury. The great thing about these groups is they are all online, so you can join from anywhere! Here are our current options:

For Adults with Brain Injury: Every Tuesday at 1 p.m.

For Caregivers: 1st Monday of every month at 2:30 p.m.

To Join:

Download Ring Central Meeting to your computer or smartphone, click Join Meeting and type the meeting ID: **894 179 693**

-or-

Type this link into your browser:

https://v.ringcentral.com/join?jid=894179693

No internet? No problem: Call +1 (650) 242-4929, type the above meeting ID then press #.

For more information contact NeCol Whitehead at nwhitehead@arsources.org or call/text 479-802-3903.

For Teens (ages 14-18) with Any Disability

Meets the 2nd & 4th Thursday of the month from 4:30-5:30 p.m.

- Know yourself, what you need, and how to get it
- Build relationships with peers who have similar experiences
- A safe place to talk about struggles and challenges

To sign up, contact Kasi Miller at kmiller@arsources.org or 479-802-3907 (calls or texts welcome).

SoUrces
Helping People with Disabilities Live Independently

Social Security/ Disability POINTERS

SLAM THE SCAM: HOW TO SPOT GOVERNMENT IMPOSTERS

By Tonya Cater, Social Security Public Affairs Specialist

Do you know how to spot a government imposter scam? Knowing how to identify potential scammers will help keep your personal information safe.

There are similar tricks in many of these scams. Scammers often try to scare people by making threats of owed money, arrest, or legal action. Scammers may also pose as Social Security or other government employees and claim there is a problem with your Social Security number (SSN) or your benefits. They may even claim your SSN is linked to a crime.

When you identify a potential scammer:

- Hang up right away or ignore the message.
- Never give personal information or money.
- Report the scam immediately to our Office of the Inspector General at **oig.ssa.gov/scam-awareness/report-the-scam**.

If you ever owe money to Social Security, **we will mail you a letter** with payment options and appeal rights. We only accept payments electronically through Pay.gov, Online Bill Pay, or physically by check or money order through our offices.

We will never do the following:

- Threaten you with arrest or legal action because you don't agree to pay us money immediately.
- Promise a benefit increase in exchange for money.
- Ask you to send us gift cards, prepaid debit cards, wire transfers, internet currency, cryptocurrency, or cash through the U.S. mail.

Scammers continue to evolve and find new ways to steal your money and personal information. Please stay cautious and help raise awareness about Social Security-related scams and other government imposter scams. For more information on scams, please visit **www.ssa.gov/scam**.

Tell your friends and family about government imposter scams. Let them know they don't have to be embarrassed to report if they already shared personal financial information or suffered a financial loss. The important thing is to report the scam right away.

Together, we can "Slam the Scam!"

Suggest a topic! Email us at
braininjury@uams.edu

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Brain Injury Program

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Little Rock, AR

The IDHI Brain Injury Program offers a disability resource website to connect those with trauma-related disabilites to helpful resources and organizations in the community.

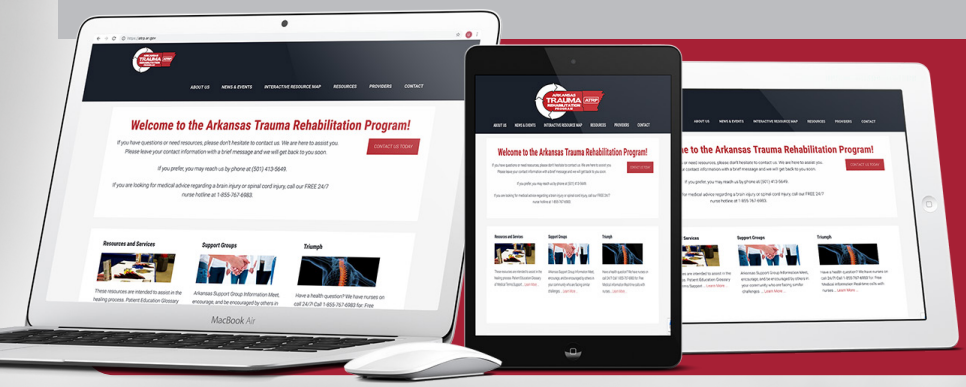
To access the disability resources website, go to:

https://idhi.uams.edu/brain-injury-program/

We also offer a 24-hour nurse call center for people with a brain or spinal cord injury, their caregivers, or medical providers. Call anytime with questions about your health, symptoms, or medical care.

To access the call center, call:

1-855-767-6983



For more information about the disability resource website or the nurse call center, call **(501) 295-6576** or email **tbiteam@uams.edu**

The nurse call center is a partnership of the UAMS Institute for Digital Health & Innovation and the UAMS Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, and is funded by the Brain Injury Program.

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