

SENIOR SENSE is a quarterly publication provided by your local county UGA Extension office. It is prepared by Extension Family & Consumer Sciences specialists at The University of Georgia specifically for the educational needs of older Georgians. Please contact your local UGA Extension office for more information on these and related topics.



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## Relationships Stroke and Personality Change

During Ed's career in sales, part of his success was due to his positive, outgoing personality. He made friends easily and thrived on interacting with new and old friends. Ten years into retirement, Ed continued to enjoy life – until he suffered a mild stroke. Ed recovered physically from the stroke, but he had changed. He tended to forget things now that he had known well, he spent lots of time in bed or staring out the window, and he just seemed to lose interest in his hobbies.

A stroke occurs when blood supply to part of the brain is suddenly interrupted, often

from a blood clot or burst blood vessel. Without blood flow, the affected part of the brain starts to die. Some of the effects of a stroke can be reversed; others are permanent.

Ed's changes after his stroke are not uncommon. Strokes can create dramatic changes in brain functioning, resulting in changes not only in thinking and memory but also in mood and personality. The severity of the stroke, and the part of the brain affected, determine the kind of changes that result.

Depression is probably the most common personality change after a stroke, affecting





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more than half of stroke victims. Depression is more serious than “having the blues.” Some symptoms include:

- Feeling hopeless and helpless
- Feeling tired all the time and difficulty sleeping
- Losing interest in hobbies and general apathy
- Overeating or loss of appetite
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Thoughts of death and suicide

With depression, these symptoms persist beyond two weeks or so.

Clearly, caregivers of stroke victims are also affected by these changes. Many caregivers are under significant stress prior to a loved one’s stroke, and about one in three suffer from depression themselves after a loved one’s stroke.

The good news is that most cases of depression respond well to treatment. A combination of talk therapy and medication seems to work well. Participating in specialized support groups, both for stroke victims and their caregivers, can be very helpful. Good nutrition and exercise are also important. Your healthcare provider can guide you through the best options for your situation.

## Housing

### Save Money at the Grocery Store

Coupons and thrifty shopping are back in style. Reality shows and specialty blogs feature super coupon users who pay pennies on the dollar at the grocery store. You may never do as well as these coupon-oholics, but spending an hour or two thinking about what you need before you shop can save money.

You have a high degree of control over your grocery bill. The amount you spend for food depends entirely upon the choices you make. Here are some tips to help you spend less at the grocery store.

Plan ahead. Think about the meals you will prepare between now and the next time you shop. Use your menu to create your shopping list.

Always shop with a list. You are more likely to buy impulse items and other things you may not need when you shop without a list, and more likely to forget something. Get to know the store you use the most, and list the items you need by where they are in the store.



If you compare ingredients, you will often find no difference between store and national brands.

Buy fresh fruit and vegetables when they are in season. Buying out of season adds the cost of shipping and import fees. Buying in season means you get a fresher product and hang on to more of your money.

Use coupons only for items you buy anyway. Food companies release coupons to increase sales, especially for new products. Avoid buying items you would not normally purchase because you have a coupon.

Consider store brands. Even with a coupon, brand name products are often more expensive than other options. If you compare ingredients, you will often find no difference between store and national brands. Store brands are often as good as and in some instances, even better than national brands.

Compare unit prices. The unit price is how much the item costs per ounce, pound or other unit. Contrary to what many people think, the largest size is not always the cheapest. You can find the unit price on the shelf sticker.

Paying attention to how you shop at the grocery store can help you to get more for your food dollar. Saving a few dollars each trip to the store

may seem to be more trouble than it is worth. Those few dollars each week can add up to a lot of money in a year or two.

## **Nutrition Preventing Dementia**

People are living longer, but this increases risk for developing dementia. You may think of Alzheimer's when you think of memory loss, but there are over 100 different types of dementia. The term "dementia" refers to a decline in mental ability that interferes with daily life. Memory loss is just one example. Researchers are trying to figure out what can prevent or at least delay memory loss. Some things seem to clearly make a difference while others are not proven yet.

Uncontrolled high blood pressure increases risk for small strokes that can cut the blood supply to the brain. This does permanent damage to important areas where memories are created and stored. To control your blood pressure, lose weight if you are overweight, exercise for at least 30 minutes most days of the week, take blood pressure medicine if prescribed, and follow the D.A.S.H. diet.



Please see  
page 5 for a  
great recipe!

What is the D.A.S.H diet? It is the only diet proven to control high blood pressure. Each day it includes 8-10 servings of vegetables and fruits, three cups of non-fat or low fat dairy foods, whole grains, two servings of nuts and/or cooked beans and peas, and small amounts of meat, fish or poultry, and very little added sugar and fat. It works best if you keep your sodium intake to less than 2300 milligrams per day. Lowering sodium to 1500 milligrams per day may help decrease blood pressure even more.

Eating fatty fish at least twice a week and consuming berries like strawberries and blueberries several times a week may also preserve memory. Caffeine from coffee can also stimulate the brain, but it seems to require large amounts and this may not be good for your blood pressure control or sleep.

Another risk factor is high levels of insulin in your blood. This is due to insulin resistance where the body cannot use the insulin it produces well. When the body does not use insulin efficiently, the body needs higher levels to keep the blood glucose under control. People with

pre-diabetes and Type 2 diabetes are more likely to have this problem. When insulin is high in the blood, it is not high enough in the brain. This may damage the brain. Again, eating a healthy diet controlled in carbohydrate, losing weight if you are overweight, and exercising regularly can help to manage the problem.

People who keep on learning also seem to have less memory loss. To enhance your mental well-being, take classes, play games, learn new skills and hobbies, and continue to interact with people either in person, using the telephone, or write letters and emails. Think of these activities as exercise for your brain!

Getting enough undisturbed sleep may also protect your brain. Have a regular bedtime in a dark and cool bedroom. Turn off the TV and read or do some other restful bedtime ritual for at least an hour before bed to make it more likely that you will sleep better.

Talk to your doctor if you think you or someone you love may be suffering from dementia.



## Savory Mustard and Herb Salmon

*Here is a delicious entrée made with heart and brain healthy salmon that uses minimal added salt (found in the mustard) and sugar (honey). Leftovers are delicious served cold over a salad for lunch! Try to eat cold-water fatty fish, such as salmon, tuna, and mackerel twice per week .*

**Yield: 4 servings of salmon (approximately 6 ounces each)**

- 1 clove garlic, minced**
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard**
- 1 teaspoon olive oil**
- ½ teaspoon white wine vinegar**
- ½ teaspoon honey**
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary (or 2/3 teaspoon dry rosemary)**
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme (or 1/3 teaspoon dry thyme)**
- 1 ¾ pounds (or 4, 7 to 8 ounce filets) of fresh or frozen salmon**
- 2 Tablespoons of your favorite salt-free seasoning**
- Lemon wedges to taste (optional)**

**Note:** If using frozen salmon, thaw in the refrigerator or microwave. After thawing in the refrigerator, salmon will remain safe in refrigerator for an additional day or two. Only use your microwave “defrost” settings if you plan to cook the salmon immediately.

- 1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.**
- 2. Combine garlic, Dijon mustard, olive oil, white wine vinegar, honey, rosemary, and thyme in a small bowl and stir vigorously with a fork. Set aside.**
- 3. Spray a large baking sheet with non-stick spray. Place salmon skin side down on the baking sheet. Pat salmon dry with a paper towel. Dispose of paper towel.**
- 4. Sprinkle the salt-free seasoning mix evenly over the salmon.**
- 5. Place salmon in the oven and bake for 10 to 12 minutes or until opaque (milky white). Thicker filets may take a bit longer to cook.**
- 6. Remove the salmon from the oven and brush filets with mustard sauce.**
- 7. Return salmon to the oven and bake for 2 minutes more or until mustard sauce is lightly browned and salmon is opaque or milky white in the center and flakes with a fork.**
- 8. If desired, squeeze fresh lemon juice over salmon before serving.**

### Nutrition Analysis:

Calories: 276

Fat: 11 gm

Sodium: 207 mg

Carbohydrates: 1 gm

Saturated Fat: 2 gm

Fiber: 0 gm

Protein: 41 gm

Cholesterol: 91 mg



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