



A Publication of the Presbytery of West Virginia



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Links for more information:

Your local **Area Agency on Aging** is a clearinghouse of information on caregiving, community resources, financial assistance and health Insurance options for older adults and their families.

Family Caregiver Alliance:

1-800-445-8106,
www.caregiver.org

National Family Caregivers Alliance:

1-800-896-3650,
<http://caregiveraction.org/>

The National Respite Locator Service:

1-919-490-5577,
<https://archrespite.org/respitelocator>

Welcome to the Presbytery of WV's newest resource!



It is our goal to provide helpful information about current resources and research for congregations and individuals who work with and serve older adults in WV. If you have news to share, items you have found

helpful, celebrations to share and questions you wish to have explored, please contact Barbara Chalfant at missions@wvpresbytery.org or by calling the Presbytery office. We will include your suggestions in our publication.

Does Diet Matter?

Research on dietary effects on cognition is ongoing. A number of studies suggest that eating certain foods may help keep the brain healthy—and that others can be detrimental to cognitive health. A diet that includes lots of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and is low in fat and added sugar can reduce the risk of many chronic diseases, including heart disease and type 2 diabetes. Researchers are looking at whether a healthy diet also can help preserve cognitive function or reduce the risk of Alzheimer's.



Studies have found, for example, that a diet rich in vegetables, especially green leafy vegetables & cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, is associated with a reduced rate of cognitive decline. One epidemiological study reported that people who ate a "Mediterranean diet" had a 28 percent lower risk of developing MCI (Mild Cognitive Impairment) and a 48 percent lower risk of progressing from MCI to Alzheimer's disease. A Mediterranean diet includes vegetables, legumes, fruits, cereals, fish, olive oil, mild to moderate amounts of alcohol, and low amounts of saturated fats, dairy products, meat, and poultry.

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While some foods may stave off cognitive decline, other foods, such as saturated fats and refined carbohydrates (white sugar, for example), may pose a problem. In one study, scientists fed rats a “Western” diet high in fats and simple carbohydrates for 90 days. The results: rats fed this high-energy diet performed significantly worse on certain memory tests than rats fed a diet containing one-third the fat. Notably, the rats scored poorly on tests that involve the hippocampus, a part of the brain that plays a major role in learning and memory.

Some scientists have focused on DHA (docosahexaenoic acid), an omega-3 fatty acid found in salmon and certain other fish. Studies in mice specially bred to have features of Alzheimer’s disease found that DHA reduces beta-amyloid plaques, abnormal protein deposits in the brain that are a hallmark of Alzheimer’s. Although a clinical trial of DHA

showed no impact on people with mild to moderate Alzheimer’s disease, it is possible that DHA supplements could be effective if started before cognitive symptoms appear.

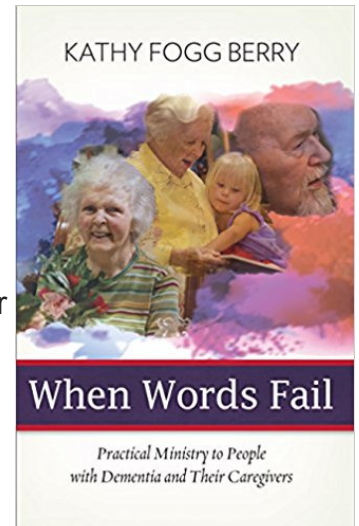
These findings are of great interest and suggest possible areas for future study. The NIA supports clinical trials to examine the relationship between several dietary components and Alzheimer’s disease and cognitive decline.

A Helpful Book

When Words Fail: Practical Ministry to People with Dementia and Their Caregivers. Author: Rev. Kathy Fogg Berry.

More than 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer’s disease today—a number expected to triple in the next 30 years. Many more experience other forms of dementia. For faith communities, this represents a crucial opportunity for ministry and practical care—one that many aren’t adequately prepared for.

Amidst mental and physical decline, those suffering from dementia diseases still deeply need human connection and spiritual nourishment. Oftentimes when words begin to fail for people with dementia, they also fail for those around them, who don’t know what to say or what to do.



A new resource is available now to help! Westminster Canterbury Richmond has just completed the *When Words Fail* project – a book, DVD, Study Guide and website. Written by one of their chaplains, the Rev. Kathy Fogg Berry, this resource equips people to reach out to those living with dementia and offer person-centered spiritual care—ministering to the mind, body, and soul.

This project is rich with practical examples and tools designed to meet these emotional, physical, and spiritual needs, and devotes particular attention to ways of communicating even after words have failed. Taken together, these tools give pastoral workers a better understanding of how to visit and support not only people living with dementia but their caregivers. The book or the video, or both, can be purchased at: www.whenwordsfail.com