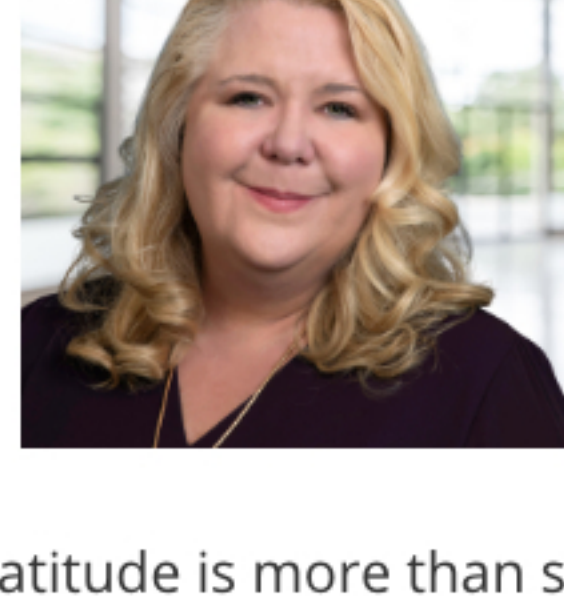




Spotlight Story

* Cultivating Gratitude for Brain Health: A Powerful Mindset for the Holiday Season



Karen Miller, PhD
Senior Director, Brain Wellness & Lifestyle Program

As the holiday season approaches and we prepare for Thanksgiving, it's the perfect time to reflect on the concept of gratitude for overall well-being.

Gratitude is more than simply saying "thank you." It is a mindset — a positive practice that meaningfully influences our lives, including our emotional health, physical health, sleep, and relationships.

A growing body of research shows that practicing gratitude has profound health benefits. For example, journaling before bed — including writing down what we are grateful for and acknowledging our worries — helps calm racing thoughts and can improve sleep quality. When we sleep better, we support our brain and body's ability to function well.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Dr. Miller's Memory Minute



* A Quick Holiday Brain Boost

In addition to journaling during the holiday season, try adding a quick verbal fluency warm-up each day. This simple exercise stimulates the language centers and the frontal lobes of your brain, supporting cognitive health.

- While brushing your teeth or taking a shower or bath, spend at least 1–2 minutes thinking of as many positive words as you can.
- If possible, challenge yourself to come up with new words each day. They can be nouns, verbs, adjectives, or adverbs — you choose!

The Balanced Plate with Molly

* Mindful Eating: A Daily Practice of Gratitude



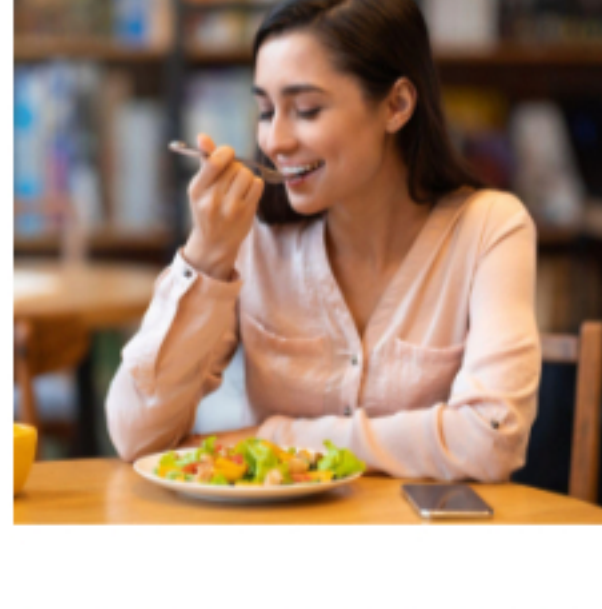
Molly Rapozo, MS, RDN
Registered Dietitian & Senior Brain Health Coach

Mindful eating is more than a nutrition strategy; it's a way to honor our bodies, our food, and the moment we're in. By slowing down and tuning in, we cultivate appreciation and support brain health in powerful ways.



Brain Benefits of Mindful Eating

Eating with awareness activates the prefrontal cortex, which supports decision-making, emotional regulation, and impulse control. It also reduces stress-related eating by calming the nervous system and enhancing satisfaction, helping us feel nourished, not just full.



How to Eat Mindfully

Start by removing distractions and focusing on the sensory experience of your meal: the colors, textures, aromas, and flavors. Pause between bites, chew slowly, and notice how your body responds. This simple shift builds connection and gratitude for the nourishment in front of you.



A Gentle Invitation

This season, try one mindful meal each day. Whether it's a solo breakfast or a shared dinner, let it be a moment of presence and thanks for the food, the hands that prepared it, and the body it fuels.

Support Your Well-Being

* Give Yourself the Gift of Health Coaching This Season



One-on-One Coaching

Whether you're navigating typical aging, mild cognitive changes, or a new diagnosis like Parkinson's, personalized health coaching can help you feel more confident, supported, and empowered.

Recent clinical trials show that coaching improves lifestyle adherence, emotional well-being, and cognitive outcomes. In fact, the COCOA Study (*J. Alzheimer's Disease, 2023*) found that a healthy lifestyle supported by coaching had a greater treatment effect than Lecanemab; a costly medication with notable risks. Participants who worked with a coach were most likely to sustain meaningful health improvements.

About Your Coach: Molly Rapozo, MS, RDN

Molly Rapozo, a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, served as the brain health coach for the COCOA Study and is now available for private coaching. This season, consider gifting yourself a coaching package; a powerful step toward clarity, resilience, and brain-friendly living. [Learn more about Molly.](#)

Brain Wellness & LIFESTYLE

PROGRAM

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