

LA JOLLA LIGHT

VOL. 107, ISSUE 39 • SEPTEMBER 27, 2018

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ONLINE DAILY AT lajollalight.com

Brain-health series focuses on Alzheimer's prevention

Begins Oct. 2 at La Jolla Community Center

BY BARBARA BURTON GRAF

More than 5 million people in the United States suffer from Alzheimer's disease — it's the third leading cause of death. The good news is that there is much that can be done to impact the onset, with some research showing a reversal of symptoms.

The "reversal protocol," outlined by internationally recognized neurologist Dr. Dale Bredeesen, includes a focus on a plant-based, slightly ketogenic diet, high intensity exercise, excellent sleep patterns and a tailored regiment of vitamins and supplements.

This fall, certified brain-longevity therapy specialist Sasha Briskin will offer a five-part "Four Pillars of Brain Longevity" seminar at the La Jolla Community Center, focusing on the medical and scientific paradigm shift in understanding brain health; physical and mental brain stimulation techniques; the brain-gut connection, including diet and supplements; stress management and the connection between happiness and social interactions; and brain health.

Briskin's focus will take participants from the big picture — how science and medicine is actually proving that cognitive decline can be prevented or even reversed — to actual steps individuals can take in their daily lives.

"This is good news," said Briskin, who holds a B.S. in cognitive science and is certified by the Alzheimer's Research &



COURTESY

Brain-health instructor Sasha Briskin holds a B.S. in cognitive science and is certified by the Alzheimer's Research & Prevention Foundation.

Prevention Foundation. "Science and medicine are proving that we can prevent or even reverse cognitive decline. Our environmental and lifestyle changes can even affect our gene expression, neurogenesis (generation of new neurons) and neuroplasticity (brain reprogramming)."

She added that she will also incorporate some of the new research and protocol outlined by Dr. Bredeesen.

With the aim of simplifying the promising medical and scientific research behind brain health, Briskin will also offer practical tips for lifestyle and dietary changes and her classes are interactive with brain games, yoga, meditation and relaxation techniques. (See sidebar.)

10 Tips to Prevent Memory Loss

- Exercise (aerobically) at least 30-60 minutes daily.
- Stimulate your brain: Meditate, play bridge or brain-stimulating games, and learn new languages.
- Have a healthy gut: Eat leafy greens, healthy fat.
- Reduce stress and get good sleep: Stress and poor sleep shrink the brain, reduce memory and focus.
- Avoid toxins and detoxify: You need an adequate intake of water and some fasting.
- Keep social interactions: Isolation increases the risk of cognitive decline by 50 percent.
- Have a purpose.
- Work with a health specialist who understands importance of disease prevention (diet, exercise, food, supplements and drug interactions).
- Maintain good dental hygiene.
- Have a positive outlook on life.

The earlier these preventative lifestyle changes are incorporated, the less the risk for developing dementia or other chronic diseases. Research has shown that amyloid-8 plaques can form in the brain as early as in the 30s and 40s, with the onset of symptoms in the 60s.

— Sasha Briskin

"We have to think combination therapy — using exercise, diet, stress reduction, gut health, and an understanding of our genetics and toxins in our environment — to create our path to cognitive health," she concluded.

Briskin's five-part workshop series runs 1-2:30 p.m. Tuesdays, Oct. 2-30, at the La Jolla Community Center, 6811 La Jolla Blvd.

The cost is \$60 for Community Center members and \$80 for non-members. The drop-in cost is \$16 for members, \$22 non-members.

To register, call (858) 459-0831 or visit ljcommunitycenter.org

— Barbara Burton Graf is the marketing specialist at La Jolla Community Center.