

DISABILITY INDEPENDENCE, EMPOWERMENT & FAIRNESS

INTERSTATE CONNECTIONS



OCTOBER IS BLINDNESS AWARENESS MONTH

General Disability Etiquette - Visual Impairments

Introduce yourself when approaching. Provide clear verbal instructions

Do: Always introduce yourself when you approach someone who is blind or has a visual impairment. "Hi, I'm [Your Name]. How can I assist you today?"

Do: When giving directions, be specific. For example: "The door is on your left, 10 feet ahead."

Don't: Use vague terms like "over there" or "straight ahead."

These "Think Again" reminders are courtesy of ILICIL Independent Lifestyles, Inc. in Sauk Rapids Minnesota.

UPCOMING EVENTS JUST FOR YOU!

APRIL CONFERENCE

October 23 - 25th

Niagra Falls, NY

The Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL), a national disability-led organization, hosts this conference to work on advocacy, collaboration, shared experience, leadership development, education, and training.



Find more accessible events at www.dacnw.org/events

Working to Restore Accessible Transportation

NEWS FROM DAC NW

The loss of COAST Transportation was devastating to our region. DAC has been working ever since to rebuild accessible transportation in rural parts of Idaho. In rural areas, accessible transportation is often the difference between independence and isolation. Distances are long, public transit is sparse or non-existent, and essential services like medical specialists, pharmacies, stores and employers are miles apart.



For seniors and people with disabilities who cannot drive, the absence of accessible options means missed appointments, limited job opportunities, and reduced participation in community life. Rural residents tend to be older and have higher rates of disability than urban residents, yet have fewer taxis, ride shares or fixed route services. Providing wheelchair accessible vehicles, demand-response shuttles, and volunteer drivers will help close this gap.

After securing funding, we purchased three of the COAST vehicles. These have been undergoing maintenance to make sure they are safe and will run properly for a long time.

People for People have done the same with COAST vehicles and are currently running accessible transportation in Washington's Whitman County.

Demand/Response transportation service is a reservation door-to-door service that is available for eligible individuals in Whitman County and surrounding counties whether you need door-to-door service (if you are not using Medicaid), fixed-route services, or require assistance with a Medicaid eligible trip. If you would like to arrange a ride, call 1-800-873-9996. They are hiring full-time or part-time NON-CDL Drivers in the Colfax area. You can apply [here](#).

After repairs and licensing the DAC vehicles, we will be partnering with People for People and starting up accessible transportation in rural north central Idaho.

After the death in 2018 of one of our long time board members, Dianne Milhollin, the board voted unanimously to purchase an accessible van in her honor. We are proud to announce that the arrival of our **Dianne Milhollin Memorial Van** should be the middle of this month sometime! Dianne was blind, and knew the need for people to have transportation in rural areas for groceries and entertainment as well as medical appointments.

DAC is looking forward to a future where everyone can access their community.



DAC NW – YOUR KEY TO INDEPENDENCE

Seeing the World thru Color Blind Eyes

NEWS FROM DAC NEW

Color Blindness Awareness is a global initiative to educate the public about color vision deficiencies (CVD), promote color accessibility, and support the estimated 350 million people affected worldwide. Color blindness affects 1 in 12 men (about 8%) and 1 in 200 women (about 0.5%) globally.

What does it mean if you have color blindness? This means you see colors differently than most people. CVD makes it hard to tell the difference between certain colors.

According to the [National Eye Institute](#), the most common type of CVD makes it hard to tell the difference between red and green.



Another type makes blue and yellow look the same. In rare cases, people have complete CVD, which means they don't see color at all.

Watch [Tennessee Viewfinders for the Colorblind | TN Vacation](#) to learn about what Tennessee has done to help those with color blindness experience the state's lush forests with bright greens and yellows in the spring and vivid reds and oranges in the fall.

Red-green color blindness is inherited through the mother's X chromosome. Because it is an X-linked trait, it comes from both parents for daughters, but only from the mother for sons. The two genes that produce red and green light-sensitive proteins are located on the X chromosome. Mutations in these genes can cause color blindness.

The first person to realize that color blindness exists was John Dalton (1766-1844). As a scientist, he became aware that neither he nor his brother saw colors the same way as everyone else. He believed this was because they both had blue liquid in their eyes, which of course was not the case. Dalton left his eyes to science so that people could find out the actual cause when he died. Even though he did not correctly understand what the cause was of his and his brother's color blindness, Dalton did understand that because both he and his brother were affected that their condition must be hereditary. Then, over 150 years later, DNA proved he had inherited color blindness. Color blindness is also known as [Daltonism](#) in his memory.

Men have a much higher risk than women for color vision deficiency. You are also more likely to have color vision deficiency if you:

- Have a family history of color vision deficiency
- Have certain eye diseases
- Have certain health problems, like diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, or multiple sclerosis (MS)
- Take certain medications
- Are white

There is no cure for color blindness that is inherited, but most people can adjust to it. Children with color blindness may need help with some classroom activities, and adults with color blindness may need accommodations to do jobs that rely on telling the difference between colors, like being a graphic designer.

If your color vision deficiency is happening because of another health problem, your doctor will need to treat the condition that is causing the problem. If a medication is causing color blindness, your doctor may adjust how much you take or suggest you switch to a different medication.

If you would like to test yourself for color blindness, Enchroma provides a free [Online Color Blind Test](#).

If you would like assistance in requesting accommodations for color blindness, reach out to DAC NEW at (509) 606-4639.

WORKING FOR INDEPENDENCE, EMPOWERMENT, AND FAIRNESS

NW ADA CENTER ~ Idaho

ADA Question of the Month

QUESTION:

Why aren't there more universal changing tables in public restrooms?

ANSWER:

The ADA mandates that baby changing stations be present in both men's and women's restrooms.



If you have changing tables in your facility that has multiple toilet or bathing rooms, changing tables should be dispersed throughout the facility. And because toilet rooms are commonly separated between Men and Women, if one toilet room has a changing table, the other toilet room should have a changing table as well, or have one in an accessible "family" bathroom. It is best to locate changing tables so that they are easy to use by people with disabilities with room to roll under the table..

The reality is someone with a disability that requires personal care in the restroom, often doesn't outgrow the need for a changing table. Parents and caretakers of people with disabilities frequently encounter the need for a universal, or adult, changing table. These are not required under the ADA, but a business can always go above and beyond the ADA to provide accessibility to their customers.

If a facility voluntarily installs an adult changing table, the ADA provides technical guidelines (such as height and clear floor space requirements under work surface standards) on how to make it accessible.

For additional information contact **Dana Gover, MPA, ADAC, Training & Technical Assistance Consultation**

Northwest ADA Center-Idaho Email: dananwadacenteridaho@gmail.com ADA TA

Hotline: voice and text

208-841-9422

Did U Know?

Americans with disabilities hold roughly \$490 billion in disposable income. Inclusion isn't charity, it's good for our communities and our economy.

Finding Balance when Caregiving and Career Demands Pull you Apart by Dean Burgess

Caregivers of people with disabilities often carry a quiet, constant tug-of-war: supporting someone else's needs while still wanting a steady career and a life that feels like their own. The workday doesn't pause for appointments, paperwork, or sudden changes, and career goals alongside caregiving can start to feel like competing loyalties. Add the emotional challenges of caregiving; worry, guilt, fatigue, and the work-life-caregiving tension can leave even capable, dedicated people feeling stretched thin. With the right mindset and a few clear shifts, balancing personal life and caregiving can become more doable.



Use a Weekly Plan to Regain Control

When you're pulled between caregiving, work demands, and your own needs, "doing more" isn't the answer, doing the right things on purpose is. Try this 4-part weekly plan to bring the tug-of-war back into balance without overhauling your whole life.

1>Pick 3 caregiving priorities for the week: List every caregiving task on your mind, then circle the three that most affect safety, health, or keeping the household running. Put those three items on your calendar first, before "nice-to-do" extras. This works because it turns constant mental pressure into a short, clear plan, and it gives you a calm way to say "not this week" to lower-impact requests.

2>Create two firm boundaries (one at work, one at home): Choose one boundary that protects your work time and one that protects your personal time, and write them as simple rules. Examples: "No non-urgent caregiving calls during my 10–12 focus block" and "After 8 p.m., I don't do paperwork, only essentials." Practicing expressing your needs makes boundaries easier to keep because you're not negotiating in the moment, you're following a decision you already made.

3>Use a 15-minute Sunday setup to prevent daily chaos: Set a timer for 15 minutes and do only three things: review appointments, identify one "pinch point" day, and assign a backup plan. A backup plan can be as small as arranging a neighbor check-in, pre-ordering groceries, or shifting a meeting earlier. This beginner time-management move reduces last-minute scrambling and helps you feel less like you're failing at everything at once.

4>Add simple technology for remote check-ins: Choose one way to reduce physical trips or constant worry, scheduled video calls, medication reminders, a shared digital calendar, or basic home sensors/alerts if appropriate. Start with a one-week trial and decide what actually lowers your stress rather than adding notifications. The goal is fewer "just in case" check-ins and more confidence that you'll be alerted when something truly needs you.

5>Ask for one flexible work change (small is fine): Pick a realistic request: one work-from-home day, a shifted start time, compressed hours, or protected meeting-free blocks. Frame it around outcomes ("I can keep response times high if I start earlier") and bring a two-week trial plan. The fact that nearly a third of workers have sought out a new job when flexibility is missing is a helpful reminder that flexibility isn't a "perk", it's a retention tool many employers already understand.

6>Build a tiny support map you can actually use: Write down three names for three roles: an "urgent backup," an "errands/helper," and an "emotional reset" person. Then send one text this week to confirm what each person can do ("Could I call you if I'm stuck in a meeting and need a quick check-in?"). When the tug-of-war spikes, a clear support map keeps you from feeling like you have to be the only solution.

Build a Flexible Career Path Through Special Education Training

Once you've started organizing your week, it becomes easier to think about longer-term moves that can make caregiving feel less financially and logistically tight. Earning a degree in a caregiving-adjacent field can open doors to more flexible, higher-paying roles, giving you more stability while you keep supporting the person who depends on you and still move forward professionally. Online degree programs can make that path realistic even when your schedule is full, letting you keep working full-time or stay closely involved with family needs while you progress through your coursework.

Finding Balance... (cont'd)

If you're drawn to work that supports students with disabilities, a special education degree is designed to prepare you for teacher licensure by pairing independent, online coursework with real classroom experience. That combination helps you build skills on your own time while still gaining hands-on practice in the setting you may eventually work in. When you're ready to explore what that kind of licensure-aligned, online pathway can look like, you can [check out this resource](#).

Habits That Protect Energy and Keep You Moving

When caregiving and work both feel urgent, small routines keep your time and attention from getting hijacked. These habits create repeatable guardrails so you can show up for others, protect your goals, and still have a personal life that feels like yours.

Two-Minute Morning Priorities

- What it is: Write your top three must-dos and one "nice-to-have."
- How often: Daily
- Why it helps: You act on essentials first, even when plans change.

Care Block Batching

- What it is: Group calls, refills, and errands into one tight window.
- How often: Weekly
- Why it helps: Batching cuts context switching and reduces mental clutter.

The Delegate Trigger List

- What it is: Define which tasks you hand off when stress rises.
- How often: Weekly
- Why it helps: Decisions get easier when you are tired or pressed.

Notification Quiet Hours

- What it is: Set two daily blocks with muted alerts and no multitasking.
- How often: Daily
- Why it helps: [Digital notifications](#) can fuel fatigue, so boundaries restore focus

Ten-Minute Decompression Ritual

- What it is: Do a short walk, stretch, or [breathing exercise](#) after caregiving tasks.
- How often: Daily
- Why it helps: It signals your body to downshift and prevents stress stacking.

Common Caregiving Balance Questions, Answered

Q: How do I set boundaries without feeling guilty or "cold"?

A: Use a caring script that names limits and offers a next step: "I can do X today, and I'll revisit Y on Friday." Guilt usually fades when people see your follow-through. If emotions run high, repeat the same line and avoid over-explaining.

Q: What if my job performance slips because caregiving is unpredictable?

A: You are not alone: [70% of family caregivers](#) report difficulty balancing work and care. Protect your reputation by flagging risks early, proposing a realistic deadline, and documenting what "done" looks like. Small visibility habits like weekly status updates help leaders see your impact.

Q: Can technology help without turning my phone into a 24/7 pager?

A: Yes, if you choose tools that reduce decisions, not add alerts. Try shared calendars, medication reminders, and one family group chat with clear "urgent" rules. Turn off nonessential notifications and route true emergencies to a single contact method.

Q: When should I ask my manager for flexibility, and what do I say?

A: Ask before you are at a breaking point, ideally after you have a plan. Share two options you can sustain, like adjusted hours or fewer late meetings, plus how you will keep results steady. Keep it focused on outcomes, not personal details.

Q: Should I put career growth on hold while I'm caregiving?

A: Not necessarily. Pick one growth move that fits your bandwidth, such as a short course, a stretch task, or a mentor check-in once a month. Protect your health too, because [17% of caregivers](#) report their health has gotten worse due to caregiving responsibilities.

A refined caregiving balance comes from a steady mindset: clear priorities, flexible boundaries, and self-compassion in busy lives when plans inevitably shift. Balance isn't a finish line; it's a weekly recalibration.

First of its Kind – Credit Union for People with Disabilities

The Ford Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) today announced joint funding to launch a credit union to serve people with disabilities. Artichoke Credit Union is a sub-brand created in partnership with Michigan State University Federal Credit Union (MSUFCU) and is designed to center the needs, voices, and experiences of the disability community, with the goal of increasing financial inclusion for people with disabilities.

Artichoke Credit Union, the first credit union of its kind, is designed to serve people with disabilities, their families, caregivers, advocates, and supporting organizations nationwide. Artichoke Credit Union is expected to begin accepting member sign-ups in the early second quarter of 2027.



The name Artichoke Credit Union is inspired by Ed Roberts, a pioneer in the independent living movement. When Roberts, who contracted polio at age 14, overheard a doctor tell his mother that he would be a “vegetable” if he survived the illness, Roberts declared that he “decided to be an artichoke—a little prickly on the outside but with a big heart.” Roberts was also the first MacArthur Fellow with a disability.

www.tundracomics.com



Tundra

by Chad Carpenter

New Home Modification Information Network VETERANS WITH DISABILITIES

Recently updated with support from ACL, the Home Modification Information Network (HMIN) is a free online resource for individuals, caregivers, professionals, organizations, and others seeking information on home modifications. HMIN brings together information about programs, funding opportunities, service providers, and other resources available at the local, state, and national levels.

Users can search by the type of assistance they need and enter a ZIP code to find relevant resources in their area.



A quick check with the Moscow ID zip code yielded The Idaho Assistive Technology Project which includes a Finance Program that provides low-interest loans to Idaho residents with disabilities to purchase assistive technology and may include building modifications for accessibility. The State Assistive Technology Grant Program, funded under the Assistive Technology Act of 2004, supports comprehensive, statewide programs in each state that improve the provision of assistive technology (often home modification-related) to individuals with disabilities of all ages.

When we searched funding for home modifications, a section came up for Veterans Housing Grants and Rehabilitation and Prosthetic Services, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Special Housing Adaption (SAH) grants to construct an adapted home, remodel a home, or apply to a mortgage balance of an adapted home purchased with a VA grant. For Veterans and Service members who are or will be temporarily residing in a home owned by a family member, there are Temporary Residence Adaption (TRA) grants. And Home Improvements and Structural Alterations (HISA) Grants funds medically necessary accessibility improvements to entrances, bathrooms, and kitchens; providing Veterans with service- related disabilities up to \$6,800 and Veterans with non-service related disabilities up to \$2,000.

**VETERAN-
DIRECTED
CARE**

**Questions about Veteran Directed Care?
Call Spokane 509-434-7000
Or Walla Walla 509-525-5200**

Guardianship vs Supported Decision Making

Young Adults – Next Chapter

When a young person with a disability turns 18, the law sees them as an adult, even if they still need help with some parts of their life. Many parents are told guardianship is the next step. It is one option but not the only one, and it isn't always the best fit.

Guardianship:

A court appoints someone, often a parent, to make legal decisions for the person.



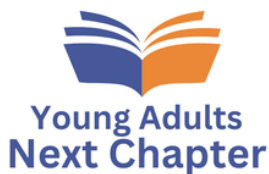
That can include decisions about health care, finances, and where they live. It transfers the decision making power away from the young adult, sometimes for a long time. And once in place it can be hard to undo.

Supported Decision-Making:

This works the other way around. Your young adult keeps the legal right to make their own choices, and trusted people help them understand information, weigh options, and communicate their decisions. Supporters might be parents, siblings, friends, or a mentor. Many families put this into writing with an agreement so doctors, banks, and schools know who can help.

Making decisions is a skill, one that grows with practice. Young adults who make choices with support, including small ones, build confidence and self-advocacy. This provides better outcomes in health, employment, and quality of life when people are in charge of their own lives.

Some questions to ask: Does my young adult understand and express preferences? Have we tried less restrictive options first? Would a limited or temporary arrangement be enough? Laws vary by state, so talk with your local CIL, or an attorney familiar with the options. A young adult who is supported is still in the driver's seat.



Rewriting the narrative of what's possible!

QUOTES TO MAKE YOU THINK

“No amount of smiling at a flight of stairs has ever made it turn into a ramp.” ~ Stella Young, from her TED talk on “Inspiration Porn.” It’s a sharp reminder that barriers are built.

Getting Ready to Vote

NEWS FROM LINC

By Jen Grushdale

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our recent Register to Vote virtual information session. Centers for Independent Living across Idaho partnered with the League of Women Voters of Idaho and Disability Rights Idaho to share information about voter registration, identification, and preparing to vote.

The November 3, 2026 General Election will be here before we know it. Whether you are voting in Idaho or elsewhere in the region, now is a good time to check your registration and make sure you have what you need.



Important Idaho dates

October 13: Early voting may begin in some counties

October 23 at 5 p.m.: Deadline to register before Election Day

October 23 at 5 p.m.: Deadline to request an absentee ballot

October 30 at 5 p.m.: Early voting ends

November 3: Election Day

Election rules and deadlines vary by state, so check with your state or local election office for current information if you live outside Idaho.

Need help getting your documents together? Your local Center for Independent Living (CIL) can help you identify the documents you may need and prepare for the registration process.

Many CILs also partner with VoteRiders, a nonpartisan organization that helps people obtain the identification and documents needed to vote. Your local CIL can help you get your paperwork together before requesting assistance from VoteRiders.

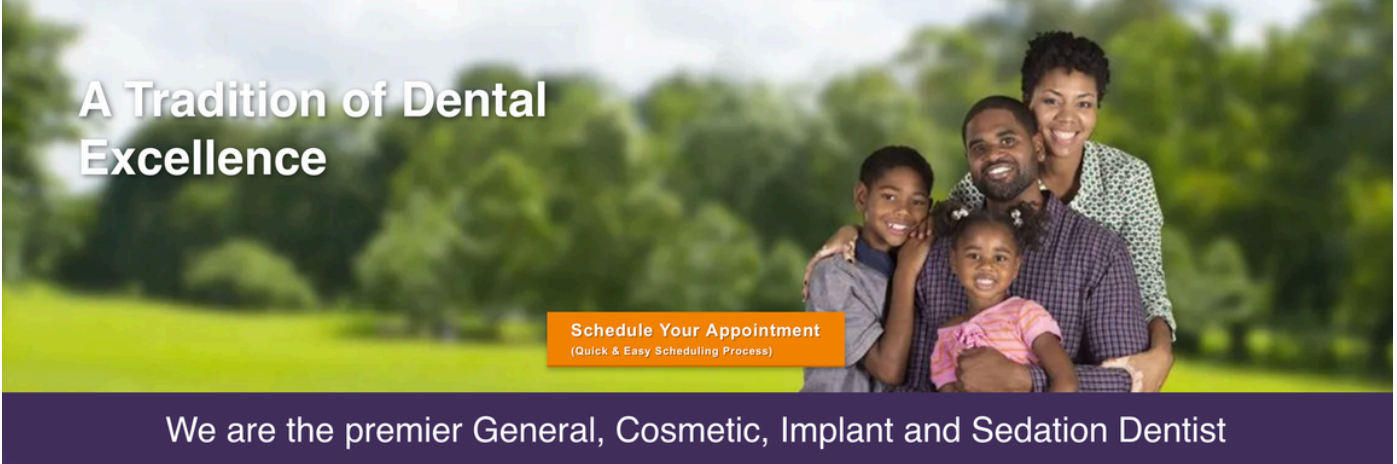
For additional voting information, visit the League of Women Voters' VOTE411 and Disability Rights Idaho's Determined to Vote resources.

Being prepared can make the voting process easier. Take some time now to check your registration, learn the deadlines that apply where you live, and gather any documents you may need.



Empowering Independence!

BLUEPATH – Finding Accessible Health Care...



A Tradition of Dental Excellence

Schedule Your Appointment
(Quick & Easy Scheduling Process)

We are the premier General, Cosmetic, Implant and Sedation Dentist

BluePath has a category for health care. A special survey that you fill out includes providing accessible documents, ADA accessible exam rooms, virtual appointments, providing interpreters where needed, and more.

It only takes around 10 minutes to list your medical office on BluePath. This lets your future patients know you are prepared to serve them in the most accessible manner possible. The survey is easy to follow and covers ADA recognized standards.

Danvers Dentistry, located in Danvers, Massachusetts provides excellent dental care in an accessible environment. This means they have accessible parking, easy to transfer into their dental chairs, and can provide you with your statements in whatever method works for you - large print, screen readable PDF, etc.

To list your medical office on BluePath, start filling out the survey and select the Health & Medical category. This will automatically bring up the survey for ADA requirements. You can easily find out what you can do to make your office more accessible to people with disabilities. And you won't find a more loyal customer base than those with disabilities. Studies show they will keep coming back to the businesses that welcome them.

BLUE  **PATH** Find **YOUR** path!

LIFE HACKS For Disability



Cutter Bowl

A cutter bowl is an easy life hack for preparing a salad independently. This all in one unit combines a strainer for rinsing, a convenient and safe chopping device, and a serving bowl to make salads effortless. Dishwasher safe. And it keeps your counters clean and dry.

\$11 pack from Walmart



Plastic covering for Joy Sticks

Made from clear plastic, this durable cover for the joystick arm of your wheelchair keeps your controls dry and your hand warm. Easy to install or remove with an adjustable strap. Even people with neuropathy can use it. Be sure to measure the arm and joystick on your chair. It fits most but not all.

Under \$15

Safety Pins

Safety pins are a life-changing disability hack. Safety pins can be used to attach your shirt to your pants. This will prevent your shirt from riding up your back throughout the day. Large quilting pins work best, and it is recommended to move your armrests up while someone else secures the safety pins to ensure they are low enough where they are not visible.



Stuff to make life easier!

The MIND Diet

Have you heard of the MIND diet? The letters stand for Mediterranean-DASH Diet Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay, and as you can guess, it's a combination of both the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) and the Mediterranean diet.

The MIND diet was first introduced in 2015, when Dr. Martha Clare Morris, a nutritional epidemiologist who developed the diet along with



colleagues at Rush University Medical Center and the Harvard Chan School of Public Health, published two papers about it in the journal, *Alzheimer's & Dementia*. It was already known that the Mediterranean diet and the DASH diet separately reduced the risk for hypertension, stroke, heart attack, and diabetes, but Morris wanted to see what happened when she combined both diets and tweaked them. She and her team discovered the MIND diet slowed cognitive decline and significantly lowered risk for developing Alzheimer's disease even if the diet was not strictly followed.

Intrigued by these results, other researchers decided to see if there were a helpful relationship between the MIND diet and Parkinson's disease. Their studies revealed the diet helped with gut health, which is thought to have an impact on brain health, and it appeared to delay the onset of Parkinson's disease, if not slow its progression.

To encourage public awareness about the MIND diet, Morris wrote two consumer health books about it. Both provide recipes and guidelines on how to follow the diet.

Four key differences set the MIND diet apart from the DASH and Mediterranean diets: 1) an emphasis on eating berries (2 or more 1-cup servings/week) over other fruits; 2) almost daily servings of leafy greens (6 or more/week) and 1 daily serving or more of some other vegetable; 3) 1 serving or more of fish per week; and 4) olive oil as the primary oil. Researchers believe the vitamin E in nuts, olive oil, and leafy greens as well as the antioxidants in berries protect the brain from oxidative stress. This protection helps preserve brain function.

While the current information is encouraging, more research is needed to determine what other benefits can be gained from following the MIND diet. If you're thinking about trying the MIND diet, have a conversation with your clinician first to be sure it is suitable for you.

References:

Morris MC, Tangney CC, Wang Y, Sacks FM, Barnes LL, Bennett DA, Aggarwal NT. MIND diet slows cognitive decline with aging. *Alzheimer's & Dementia*. 2015 Sep 1;11(9):1015-22.

Morris MC, Tangney CC, Wang Y, Sacks FM, Bennett DA, Aggarwal NT. MIND diet associated with reduced incidence of Alzheimer's disease. *Alzheimer's & Dementia*. 2015 Sep 1;11(9):1007-14.

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