

Société Alzheimer Society

CANADA

March is National Brain Awareness Month Alzheimer Society of Canada asks: are you taking care of your brain?

Toronto, ON, March 6, 2014 - Have you been neglecting your New Year's resolutions like getting to the gym? National Brain Awareness Month is a perfect time to renew your resolutions because a healthy body is a healthy brain says the Alzheimer Society of Canada.

Scientific evidence shows that 30 minutes of moderate exercise each day, whether it's a brisk walk or taking dance lessons, helps lessen the risk of dementia. Get your friends and family involved. Do something everyone enjoys. Physical activity of any kind pumps blood and oxygen to the brain which is important for brain functioning. An active lifestyle also builds up your cognitive reserve, and improves memory and thinking.

But don't stop there. The Alzheimer Society recommends combining physical activity with a healthy diet for added protection against dementia. Consuming nutrient-rich foods such as whole grains, dark leafy greens and fresh-water fish supports good cardiovascular health. It's a well-known fact that heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure are contributing factors for vascular dementia.

Training your brain to learn new things in new ways also preserves brain cells and in some cases, can even help reverse some of the cognitive decline that occurs with age. Engaging in activities with others such as volunteering or participating in a book club is even better for keeping your brain in top form. Staying connected socially boosts mood and attitude, both important ingredients for well-being.

The Alzheimer Society also encourages Canadians to manage their stress, reduce or quit smoking and wear protective head gear whenever playing sports. Understanding dementia and knowing the warning signs should also be part of everyone's brain health plan.

Dementia is a term used to describe a group of diseases that cause a gradual decline in a person's ability to remember, think and perform day-to-day tasks. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form which affects 747,000 Canadians today. The risk of dementia doubles every five years after age 65 but the disease can strike people as young as 40. Evidence also shows that changes in the brain that lead to dementia can begin up to 25 years before symptoms appear.

That's even more reason to take charge of your brain health. It's never too late or too soon. The key is to make lifestyle changes that work for you. For practical tips and other resources, visit www.alzheimer.ca/brainhealth

About the Alzheimer Society

The Alzheimer Society is the leading nationwide health charity for people living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Active in communities across Canada, the Society offers help for today through our programs and services, and hope for tomorrow by funding research into the cause, prevention and a cure.

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