

## Summertime Fun for Your Brain

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### **Summertime and the living is easy...**

That's how the song goes right? And summer does seem to be a time when life slows down a bit. People have fewer work, school and leisure commitments and many people take holidays - to visit family or friends, explore our beautiful country, or return to their favourite places.

Whether you're planning a cross-country road trip or just a trip across town to spend time with the grandchildren, here are some ideas for activities that will foster good brain health.

**Be More Active** – We've all heard that regular physical activity is important for our health and helps prevent chronic diseases such as diabetes or cardiovascular disease. But many people don't realize that physical activity is also important for brain health. Summer is a great time to get out and be more active, whether it's playing baseball or croquet, going for a hike, swimming in a lake, or working in your garden. If you like to walk, consider joining one of the Alzheimer Society's Step Out Walking Clubs which meet weekly in Peterborough and Lindsay. Persons with memory loss may attend with a care partner or can be matched with a volunteer buddy.

**Reconnect with Family or Friends** – Social interaction is good for the brain, and summer is a great time for getting together. Pack up your picnic basket and spend the day in a local park, fire up your barbecue and invite people over, or take a few friends and head out to a sporting event.

**Learn Something New** – Every weekend there are cultural events happening across the province. Country fairs, music festivals, outdoor art shows, and multicultural events can give you the opportunity to experience new sights, sounds, and tastes. If it's too hot to be outdoors, head inside your local museum. New experiences will provide positive stimulation for your brain.

**Get Outdoors and Enjoy Nature** – Being in natural surroundings can help you relax and cope with stress. Some research also shows that spending time in green spaces can have a positive effect on brain function. So get out and enjoy our beautiful countryside.

**Expand your Diet** – In the winter, it can be easy to settle into poor eating habits. But eating lots of fruits and vegetables is very important for brain health. Luckily, summer is the best time to expand your diet. The farmer's markets are already teeming with fresh local produce and pick-your-own farms make a great outing for families.

**Protect your Head** – With the warmer weather, many people will be dusting off their bicycles. Remember to dust off your helmet also. Head injuries due to falls can lead to an increased risk of dementia later in life. If you are spending time with young people this summer, encourage

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# Alzheimer Society

PETERBOROUGH, KAWARTHA LAKES, NORTHUMBERLAND & HALIBURTON

them to protect their heads... and make sure you model this behaviour by wearing your helmet also. The breeze in your hair may feel nice on a hot summer day, but the possible damage from a head injury is not worth the risk.

Whatever you decide to try this summer, be sure to use your common sense. Stay cool, keep hydrated, and wear appropriate protection (e.g., sunscreen, insect repellent). Most important of all, have fun and enjoy yourself. The snow and ice will be back before we know it!

For more information about strategies for a healthy brain, visit:

<http://www.alzheimer.ca/en/pklnh/About-dementia/About-the-brain/Brain-health>

For tips on coping with hot summer weather, visit: <http://www.alzheimer.ca/en/pklnh/Living-with-dementia/Day-to-day-living/Staying-active/Hot-weather-tips>

For information about the Step Out Walking Club, contact Jennifer Stubbart at [jenn@alzheimerjourney.ca](mailto:jenn@alzheimerjourney.ca).

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