

Dementia: you **CAN** do something about it

Did you know you can lower your risk of Alzheimer's disease by 38%? **Start today by giving your brain and body a boost!**

These **four simple steps** not only have the potential to prevent or delay the onset of Alzheimer's disease or another dementia, but they will give you a cognitive boost right now!

1. MOVE!

The research is clear: physical activity helps brain cells to grow and live longer. Blood circulating to the brain nourishes the cells with nutrients and oxygen and encourages new cells and new connections.

A body in motion means a mind in motion!

Aim for at least 10 minutes a day of physical activity, something that makes you breathe harder and sweat a little:



- **Walk** to the store instead of taking the car.
- **Gardening** that includes digging, shovelling and pushing the lawn mower can be both an aerobic and muscle-strengthening activity.
- Social **dancing** includes socializing, moving and challenging your brain with new cha cha, waltz or meringue steps!
- Do it with a friend to help you **stay motivated**.
- Always check with your **doctor** if you have specific health concerns.
- Adults aged 65 and older should accumulate at least 150 minutes of moderate-to-high-levels of intense aerobic **physical activity** per week, in bouts of 10 minutes or more.

"Being physically active is associated with a 38% reduced risk of developing Alzheimer's disease."

- Ontario Brain Institute

2. CHALLENGE YOUR BRAIN!

Research is showing that mental stimulation helps increase the brain's networks of connections and maintains brain health throughout life.

Keep your brain sharp. Give your brain a new experience and a workout each and every day:

- **Play games** to challenge your mind – chess, word and number puzzles, jigsaws, crosswords and memory games.
- **Pursue a new interest** such as learning to play a musical instrument, taking a course or going to the theatre.
- **Involve your senses** in a novel way - write your name with your opposite hand or count out coin change by using your sense of touch.
- **Read** a book – discuss it with a friend.
- Keep up **hobbies** such as sewing, carpentry or take up a new hobby.
- **Cross train** your brain – try a variety of mental challenges.



Try this: Break your routine. Throw a curve in a typical day by taking a different route to the store or changing the order of your morning routine.

3. GET SOCIAL!

Socializing relieves stress, so visiting friends, attending parties, and going to church is actually good for you. Interacting with other people also encourages thinking, feeling, analyzing, reasoning and intuition. These activities help develop connections between brain cells.

- Make the most of your daily opportunities to **socialize**: chat with your taxi driver or store clerk; strike up a conversation in the elevator.
- **Get involved** in your community: volunteer, attend social gatherings and extend invitations of your own.
- Make lifestyle choices that will keep you **connected** and get you thinking: talk to your friends, volunteer, take a trip, find a new hobby.
- **Help someone out**: practise a random act of kindness.
- **Talk** on the telephone or send an email.



Why not... offer to take care of the pets of vacationing friends and family members? Walking a dog, for example, can be good exercise and a great way to meet people.

4. EAT RIGHT!

A healthy diet helps your brain function at its best and slows down memory loss!

Most of us are aware that healthy eating can reduce the risk of diseases such as heart disease, stroke and diabetes. But did you know that you also reduce your risk of developing Alzheimer's disease?

So put a rainbow of colours on your plate!

- **Blue/purple** fruits and vegetables tend to be packed with anti-oxidants, which can neutralize the process of cellular damage that contributes to aging and disease. Blackberries, blueberries, purple cabbage, and plums are all great food choices.
- Go **green** every day with fruits and vegetables that are good for your brain and also benefit bones, teeth and vision.
- Choose **white, tan and brown** fruits and vegetables such as bananas, cauliflower, potatoes, turnips, onions and garlic.
- Add sunshine to your plate with **orange and yellow** fruits and vegetables such as grapefruit, cantaloupe, butternut squash, peaches, papaya, oranges, sweet potatoes, yellow peppers and lemons.
- Reach for **reds** every day. Beets, raspberries, red grapes, radishes, tomatoes, red peppers, watermelon, rhubarb, pomegranates, and cherries are just a few excellent red choices.
- Eat **high fibre** breads, cereals and grains and low-fat animal proteins. Fibre helps eliminate toxins. Add herbs, spices, nuts, and olives to your dishes. You don't have to give up flavour to maintain a healthy diet.
- Include foods rich in **omega-3 oils** such as cold-water fish (e.g. trout, salmon and walnuts).



Did you know? A Mediterranean diet may lower the risk of cognitive decline and dementia. What's a Mediterranean diet? Just like the list above, it's full of cereals, fruits, fish, legumes and vegetables. It's rich in unsaturated fatty acids such as olive oil, and low in meat, poultry and saturated fatty acids. Dairy products, especially yogurt and cheese, tend to be low to moderate. Meals are often accompanied by a moderate amount of alcohol (particularly wine).

It's never too late! By switching today to a healthier lifestyle, you will maintain or improve your brain health, and reduce your risk of developing dementia as well as other chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

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Remember these four easy steps:

- 1. MOVE!***
- 2. CHALLENGE YOUR BRAIN!***
- 3. GET SOCIAL!***
- 4. EAT RIGHT!***