

Taking Charge of Your Brain Health

Protect Your Head

The human brain, sometimes called the “3 pound universe within,” is one of your most vital organs. It plays a role in every action and every thought and just like the rest of your body, it needs to be looked after. By making healthy lifestyle choices now, you may be able to reduce your risk of developing Alzheimer’s disease and improve your brain’s ability to sustain long-term health.

This sheet is part of a series that provides practical action steps, based on current research, which you can take to improve your brain health. Will it prevent Alzheimer’s disease?

There are no guarantees, but healthy lifestyle choices will help keep your brain as healthy as possible as you age. And since a healthier brain can withstand illness better, it’s important to take action on the things you can control -- lifestyle choices.



Research is finding that there is an increased risk for developing Alzheimer’s disease among those who have experienced brain injuries, especially repeated concussions. Although we are all at risk for head injuries, young people tend to suffer more head traumas. Therefore it is important to protect your head, no matter your age, for lifelong brain health.

**Heads
Up for
Healthier
Brains**

Alzheimer *Society*



Take Action to Avoid Head Injuries

- Protect against concussions by wearing an approved helmet when engaging in sporting activities such as skating, skiing, skateboarding, rollerblading and cycling. Set a good example and ensure that children in your care wear appropriate helmets.
- Drive safely and always wear a seatbelt to reduce injuries in an accident.
- Use safety features like handrails to prevent falls. Falls are one of the major causes of head injuries in older adults. Many falls can be avoided and injuries prevented. Strategies include:
 - exercises to improve strength, balance, and flexibility
 - remove items around your home that may pose tripping hazards such as items on a staircase or shoes in a hallway
 - relocate frequently used items so a chair or step ladder is not required to reach them
 - review medications and dietary supplements (prescription and over-the-counter) with your doctor or pharmacist to avoid medications or combinations that may affect balance
 - improve lighting indoors and outside to improve visibility, especially around stairways, hallways, entrances
 - install handrails on all stairs (interior and exterior) and grab bars in bathrooms

Resources: Canadian Standards Association (CSA) for information on helmet safety
www.csa.ca

Note: Your abilities, health situation and interests should be taken into consideration when choosing brain healthy activities. If you have questions about your own situation, speak to your doctor or health-care provider.

See the following sheets in the Taking Charge of Your Brain Health series: Challenge Yourself, Be Socially Active, Make Healthy Food Choices, Be Physically Active, Reduce Stress, Choose Wisely. Also available is a reference list of studies regarding Alzheimer's disease and brain health.

Find out more - www.alzheimer.ca or contact your local Alzheimer Society:

Alzheimer *Society*

Alzheimer Society of Canada
20 Eglinton Avenue West, Suite 1200, Toronto, ON M4R 1K8
Tel: (416) 488-8772 1-800-616-8816 Fax: (416) 488-3778
E-mail: info@alzheimer.ca Website: www.alzheimer.ca