

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**March is National Brain Awareness Month,
Are You Taking Care of Your Brain?**

Vancouver, B.C. — 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 B.C.

Scientific evidence shows that 30 minutes of moderate exercise each day, whether it's a brisk walk or taking dance lessons, may be one of the best ways to lessen the risk of dementia. Physical activity of any kind pumps blood and oxygen to the brain which is important for brain functioning. An active lifestyle builds up your cognitive reserve, and improves memory and thinking.

But don't stop there. "Combine physical activity and a healthy diet — they're both beneficial for brain health," says Kathy Kennedy, Director of Programs & Services, Alzheimer Society of B.C. Consuming nutrient-rich foods such as whole grains, dark leafy greens and cold-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.

Managing your stress, reducing or quitting smoking and wearing protective head gear whenever playing sports all contribute to brain health. Understanding dementia and knowing the warning signs should also be part of everyone's brain health plan.

Dementia is a general term that refers to a variety of brain disorders. More than 70,000 British Columbians have dementia of which Alzheimer's disease is the most common form. The risk of dementia doubles every five years after age 65 but the disease can strike people as young as 40. Evidence 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. For tips and other resources on making lifestyle changes, visit www.alzheimerbc.org/Alzheimer-s-Disease-and-Dementia/Brain-Fitness-Plan.aspx.

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Media Contact

Christine Leclerc

Manager, Marketing & Communications

Alzheimer Society of B.C.

Phone: 604-742-4906

E-mail: cleclerc@alzheimerbc.org

Website: www.alzheimerbc.org

Twitter: www.twitter.com/AlzheimerBCnews

About Dementia

Dementia is a general term that refers to a variety of brain disorders. Symptoms include the loss of memory, impaired judgment, and changes in behaviour and personality. Dementia is progressive, degenerative and eventually terminal. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia accounting for almost two-thirds of dementias in Canada today.

About the Alzheimer Society of B.C.

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. provides a provincial network of support and education for families impacted by dementia and people concerned about memory loss.

Communities across the province count on the Society for support services, information and education programs, advocacy to improve dementia care in B.C., and to fund research to find the causes and cures. As part of a national federation, the Society is a leading authority on the disease in Canada.



ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF B.C.
#300 - 828 West 8th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 1E2
PHONE: 604-681-6530 FAX: 604-669-6907 TOLL FREE: 1-800-667-3742
WEBSITE: www.alzheimerbc.org E-MAIL: info@alzheimerbc.org
TWITTER: @AlzheimerBC FACEBOOK: AlzheimerBC YOUTUBE: AlzheimerBC
CHARITABLE REGISTRATION BN #11878 4891 RR0001