



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Learn to Protect and Maintain Brain Health during World Alzheimer's Month**

**Vancouver, B.C.** — During **September, World Alzheimer's Month**, the Alzheimer Society of B.C. would like to invite all British Columbians to participate in one of the Society's [free one-hour tele-workshops](#) on protecting and maintaining the health of their brain.

An estimated 44 million people worldwide – including more than 70,000 here in B.C. – live with Alzheimer's disease or another dementia, numbers that are expected to rise dramatically as a result of longer life expectancies and an aging population. But research suggests that a significant proportion of dementia cases worldwide may be attributable to risk factors that can be influenced through lifestyle, so education can help.

"Education is a very important component of the work we do," says Maria Howard, CEO of the Alzheimer Society of B.C. "We have programs throughout the province to educate and empower people with dementia and their care partners."

"We also consider health-care providers who work with people with dementia to be important partners, and we have useful resources and tools for them as well," says Howard.

"Our *Heads Up: An Introduction to Brain Health* workshops share current research on risk reduction and offer strategies for actively engaging in protecting and maintaining brain health," says Jennifer Stewart, Manager, Education. In these workshops, she adds, "participants learn how to set goals for improving the health of their mind, body and spirit."

Tele-workshops include a live web video of the presentation, making it easy for participants to follow along on their computers while listening on the phone. Informative handouts are also available for download after the session.

The Society maintains an archive of past workshops that are available any time and cover topics that range from [Understanding Tax Credits, Income Splitting and Estate Planning \(Feb. 2014\)](#) to [Celebrating the Holidays](#) with friends or family members who have Alzheimer's disease or another dementia. You can [watch the archived video of Heads Up tele-workshop here](#).

Learn more about how to be good to your brain today at: [www.alzheimerbc.org/Healthy-Brain.aspx](http://www.alzheimerbc.org/Healthy-Brain.aspx)

## **BACKGROUNDER:**

### **How physical activity helps.**

Studies conducted over the past 40 years show that physical activity can slow the effect of aging on the mind as well as the body, helping people stay mentally sharp as they age. Exercise is a significant factor in reducing the risk of developing dementia, in part because it stimulates increased blood flow throughout the body, bringing more oxygen and glucose to the brain.

### **Choose a healthy diet and lifestyle.**

Eat a varied diet rich in dark-coloured fruits and vegetables, including foods rich in anti-oxidants, such as blueberries and spinach; and omega 3 oils found in fish and canola oils. Avoid smoking and excessive alcohol consumption.

### **Challenge your brain by being a life-long learner.**

Brain training really works, and its effects are long lasting. Researchers found that when people with an average age of 73 years received 10 brain-training lessons, they did much better on thinking tests and reasoning skills, as well as processing new information and memory. The results of this brain training lasted for up to three years.

Chess, cards, word or number puzzles, jigsaws, crosswords and memory games are also all great ways to stay mentally active.

### **Be socially active.**

Staying connected socially helps you stay connected mentally. Many activities like hockey, dancing, chess, playing cards and Scrabble combine brain stimulus with socializing. These are good ways to interact with others and make friends. Studies have found that friends are even more valuable for good quality social connections than family members.

### **Protect your head.**

Severe brain injuries increase the risk of Alzheimer's disease or other dementias. Reduce your risk by wearing helmets when taking part in sports like cycling, hockey, football and snowboarding.

### **Education.**

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. provides support and information as people learn to cope with dementia. *Heads Up: An Introduction to Brain Health* workshops take place regularly in communities throughout the province and via tele-workshop. Visit [www.alzheimerbc/Dementia-Education.aspx](http://www.alzheimerbc/Dementia-Education.aspx) to learn more.

### **Want to make a difference in the lives of people affected by dementia AND reduce your risk?**

*Anything for Alzheimer's* is a way for creative, dedicated doers to get involved and make a difference in their community. People can plan their own fundraising event or turn an existing event or challenge into a fundraiser. We make it easy to do your thing and raise funds to support those who face dementia.

Whatever your interests, talents, age or fitness level, there is an *Anything for Alzheimer's* event out there for you! And if you are moving your body, challenging your mind, laughing or socializing with friends or colleagues, then you are also being good to your brain!

For more information about *Anything for Alzheimer's* visit <http://anythingforalzheimers.ca/> and register to do your thing today!

To volunteer with, fundraise for or become an advocate with the Alzheimer Society of B.C., visit [www.alzheimerbc.org](http://www.alzheimerbc.org). The Society is here for B.C. to provide Help for Today... *Hope for Tomorrow...*®

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Society leaders are available for interview throughout September. Photos and video are also available upon request.

Campaign hashtag: #BeGoodtoYourBrain

### **About Dementia**

Dementia is a term that describes a general group 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 health authority on the disease in Canada.

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